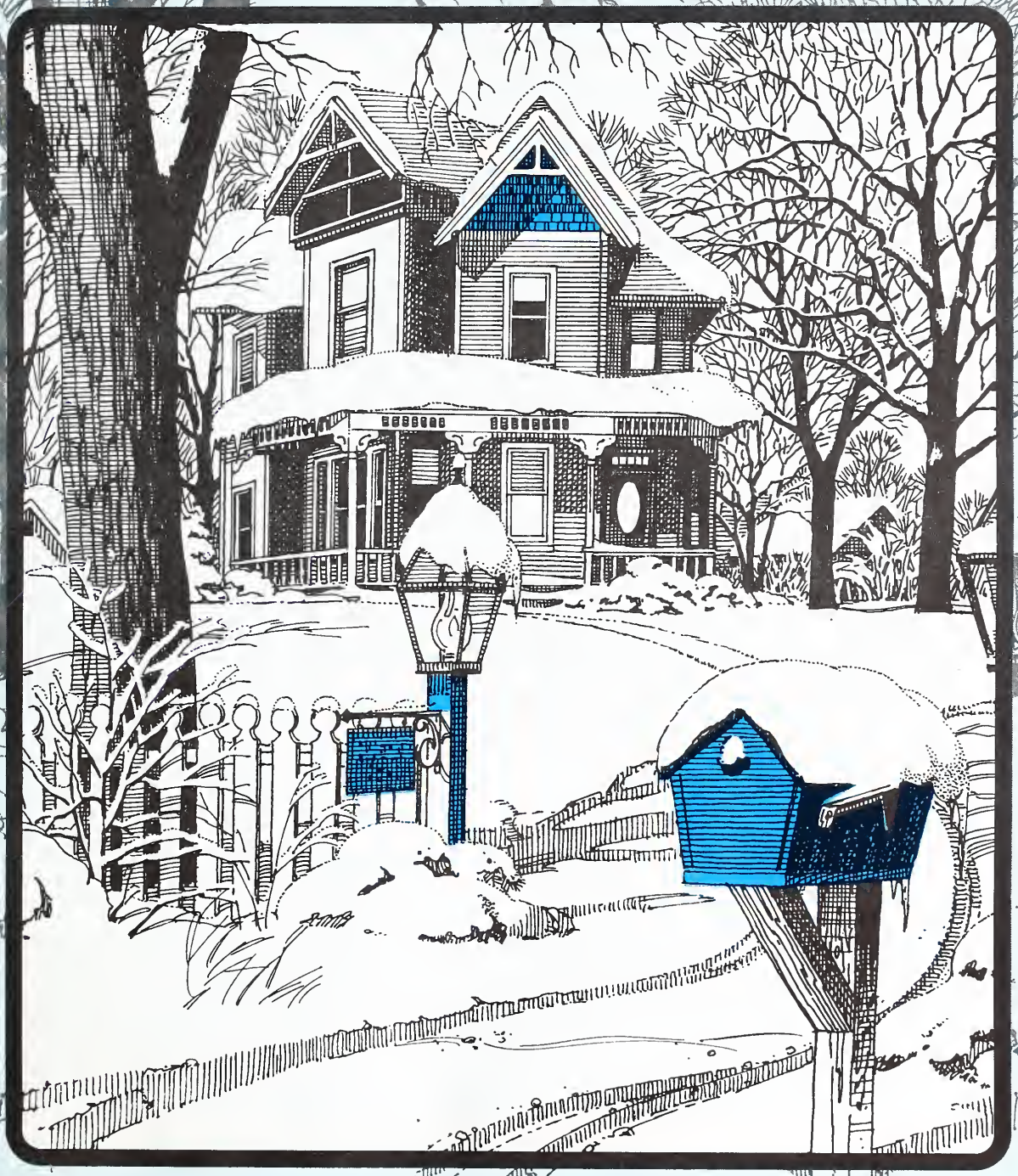
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THE BRETHREN
# Evangelist
JANUARY 1995



## Winter: Depressing Season or Time of Delight?

See page 4.

# Thoughts for the New Year

By Richard C. Winfield, Editor

WHAT WILL THIS YEAR be like, I wonder? Most of us have this question in our minds (if not in the forefront, at least lurking in the recesses) as we begin a new year. And most of us begin the new year with a certain amount of optimism. We think that the new will be better than the old.

## It depends on us

But in fact, whether or not the new year is better than the previous one depends to a great extent on us. There are, of course, many circumstances beyond our control. The death of a loved one, sickness, tragedy, and other circumstances over which we have little or no control can play a big part in determining what kind of year we will have.

Even so, for most of us, whether or not 1995 will be better than 1994 depends to a considerable degree on us. And it will depend in large measure on those things over which we *do have control.*

Will we be better people in 1995? Will we be more loving, more disciplined, better organized? Will we spend more time in Bible study and prayer? Will we exercise more, eat less, and perhaps even lose a few pounds? These things will depend in large measure on us.

Making New Year's resolutions has become something of a joke. I am reminded of the Pontius' Puddle cartoon we ran in the January 1993 issue of the EVANGELIST. Pontius says to his fellow frog, "Hi, Elton. Make any resolutions for the coming year?"

Elton replies, "Sure did. I'm going to ignore the world's problems, indulge myself more, and share less of my resources with the needy." Which causes Pontius to observe: "Whatever else you say about the 90's—we've finally learned to make a New Year's resolution we can keep.

Unfortunately, this is too close to the experience of many of us. We have been so disappointed by our lack of success in keeping past resolutions for self-improvement that we have given up on making New Year's resolutions. We have, either by design or default, resolved to be our same old selves.

But as Christians, are we justified in being so pessimistic about changing for the better? Or even more to the point, does God's word *allow* us to be content with our old selves? I think not.

## Put off the old; put on the new

The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4 talks about putting off the old self and putting on the new. In verses 22–24 (*NIV*) he says:

> You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

As Christian, we can't be content to be our same old selves. We are to put off the old and put on the new. And this is to be a continuing process.

At the beginning of a new year is a good time to evaluate ourselves and to make a renewed commitment to this kind of process in our lives. This goes beyond making light-hearted resolutions for self-improvement. In fact, the reason so many of our resolutions fail is because they are just that—*light-hearted* and for *self*-improvement. If we are going to make significant changes in our lives, we must go beyond that.

To put off the old and put on the new, whatever form that may take in our lives, we must make a real commitment to do so. This involves more than a wimpy wish for it to happen; it takes an intentional *commitment of the will.*

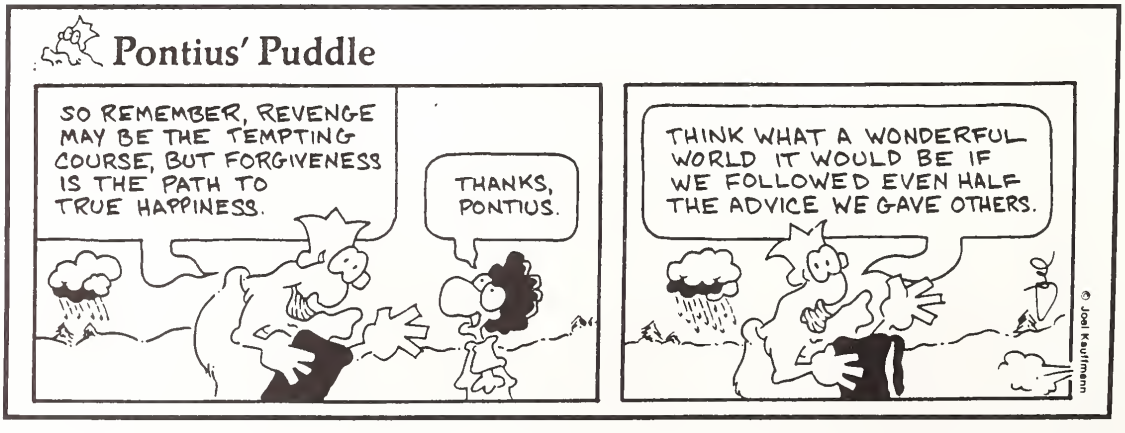
It must also go beyond *self*-improvement. We can't do it ourselves. We need God's help. If we attempt to do it in our own strength, we will fail.

## It's not too late

By the time you read this, we will be a number of days into 1995. Perhaps you've already concluded that this year is going to be little different from past years—that you are going to continue to be your same old self. If so, I'd like to suggest that there is hope for change. And it's not too late for that change to begin. Every day, not just New Year's day, offers an opportunity for renewal in Christ.

But it involves more than weak-willed resolution. It requires a strong commitment of the will and a deep, prayerful dependence upon God for His life-changing power.

What kind of year will you commit yourself to in 1995? [⇧]



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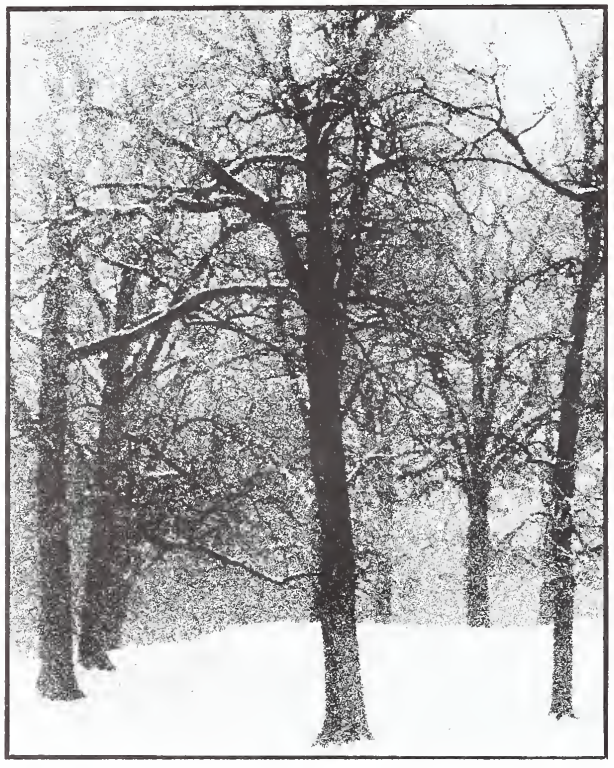
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**Answers to the Little Crusader page:**

The first sentence should be number 3; the second sentence number 1; the third sentence number 4; and the fourth sentence number 2.

The correct answer to question 1. is "no"; to question 2. is "no"; and to question 3. is "yes."



# WINTER

By Charles R. Swindoll

WINTER! Just the sound of the word whistling through our lips puts a mental chill up our spines. Winter seems to speak of barrenness, frigid feelings of discomfort and discontent, icy shadows sprawled across frozen ponds, naked branches reaching up as if in supplication for relief. Short days, long nights. Fast-fading memories of yesterday's fun in the sun.

Heavy, gray clouds and harsh winds sting our faces and steal our smiles. With grim determination we trudge on, sometimes alone and isolated, within our own little world of heavy garb and frosty windows. "The dead of winter"—ah, an apt description!

Not all agree. Ski buffs and snow lovers resent such a depressing portrayal of their favorite season. So do artists who prefer a quaint cottage in New Hampshire rather than an ocean view at Malibu or a sandy beach at St. Thomas. For many, a year without winter would be a devastating disappointment. What better time to warm up alongside a crackling fire, listen to some fine music, and stare away an evening? Toss in the joy of Christmas, the celebration of New Year's Eve, the Super Bowl, a Valentine's Day kiss . . . and you've got enough to make anybody forget ninety-five degree days, along with flies and mosquitoes at an August picnic. What a difference perspective makes!

Winter . . . the ideal occasion to slow down. To invest a few extra hours in quiet reverence. To take a long walk over the freshly fallen white manna delivered earlier that day. To remind ourselves that "our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (Psalm 115:3).



Is it winter right now in the season of your life? Are you feeling depressed . . . alone . . . overlooked . . . spiritually on "hold" . . . cold . . . barren? Beginning to wonder if your soul will ever thaw? Entertaining doubts that behind those thick, gray clouds there exists a personal, caring God?

Take it by faith, friend; He is there, and furthermore, He is neither dead nor deaf. What you are enduring is one of those dry-spell times when you'd rather curl up and cry than stand up and sing. That's okay. Those times come.

They also pass.

When this winter season ends, you'll be wiser, deeper, stronger. Therefore, in reverence look up. Be still and discover anew that He is God. That He is doing "whatever He pleases" in your life. [⇧]

*This article is from the book* ***Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*** *by Charles R. Swindoll (Zondervan Publishing House), and was provided by the publisher.*



# Uncommon Devotion

By John Shultz

This is the first of four articles by various writers on Acts 2:42, the 1995 General Conference theme verse.

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.* Acts 2:42, *NRSV*

AN EVENING RECEPTIONIST calls the office and says, "I won't be back."

The supervisor responds with, "You mean you won't be in this evening."

"No, I mean I won't be back at all. I'm quitting."

* * * * *

Is it really that difficult to give two weeks notice or to give some explanation as to why it is not possible to continue a working relationship with an employer?

A similar phenomenon occurs when a husband of 15 or 20 years says to his wife and young children, "I'm not interested in this family any more. I'm leaving."

## An example of devotion

Compare the attitude of these two individuals with that of John Kline, a hard-working, prosperous farmer in Virginia. He became a Brethren elder in 1848, at the age of 51. He loved ministry and traveled extensively among the people and churches of western Virginia. Some accounts suggest that he traveled more than 100,000 miles on horseback in the course of his pastoral work.

Kline devoted himself to Brethren doctrine and thus vigorously opposed slavery and military service. This stance created significant problems for him and others during the Civil War. If a person was unwilling to fight and ready to give aid to anyone in need, that person was viewed with suspicion by both sides. In spite of this, Kline traveled across military lines in 1862, 1863, and 1864 to attend Annual Meetings. He was arrested and imprisoned near Harrisonburg, Va., in 1862, but was released with no charges after almost two weeks in jail. Distrust of the Brethren grew, however, and on his way home from a pastoral visit on June 15, 1864, John Kline was ambushed near his home and killed. Because of Kline's uncommon devotion to his work, his principles, and the Brethren Church, he is one of our most notable martyrs.

## Where is devotion today?

It is interesting that we often must resort to the annals of history to find those who are loyal to the people in their lives or to an employer or to a philosophy of life. These days, convenience and personal rights have replaced commitment and sacrifice. Devotion to anything, much less to the word of God, is all too rare.

One look at the divorce statistics is enough to show that loyalty and devotion are uncommon qualities. In 1960, 393,000 divorces occurred in the United States. By 1990, this number had grown to 1,185,000. Six out of ten new marriages fail, in spite of the growing body of evidence that divorce wreaks havoc in the lives of both the children and the adults directly involved.

What has changed since the time of John Kline? How can we foster devotion and loyalty to one another, to The Brethren Church, and to the cause of Jesus Christ? Indeed, if we show no devotion to the people we work for or to those with whom we are intimately involved, how can we expect to be devoted to the apostles' teaching (which ultimately became a significant part of the Bible)? Perhaps one key would be to investigate how the early believers came to be devoted to the apostles' teaching?

Before Pentecost, the disciples displayed no leadership, power, or authority. They trembled at the sound and sight of the soldiers who roamed the streets of Jerusalem. They huddled in their upper room to ponder and discuss what they might do next, fearing what would happen if they ventured into the streets. This made the thought of speaking up for the cause of Jesus unthinkable.

But God had not given up on them. As they sought His presence, they were filled with a Spirit that sent them out of that room and literally throughout the world to proclaim the Story. And there was devotion to their teaching. People were committed to learning. They were willing to sacrifice time and effort and eventually much more to know the Truth. They knew what we must all realize—that it is impossible to live the Christian life without the indwelling Spirit. Uncommon devotion to others, to the church, or to Jesus Christ cannot be attained without the guidance and enabling of supernatural power.

## Changed by the Spirit

The early believers were devoted to the apostles' teaching because they had been changed by the power of the Spirit. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching because it was a source of life for them. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching because they wanted to follow God's directions closely.

Dare we be any less devoted? Does the scarcity of devotion in our world give us an out? Or must we

*Dr. Shultz, a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, is Professor of Pastoral Counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

ask the Spirit to help us be devoted to the word that fills our lives with hope and direction?

The other key to understanding the devotion of early believers to the apostles' teaching is found in what it offered them. They lived in a time when everything was up for grabs. There were a myriad of religious and philosophical approaches to life. Everywhere they turned there were offers of hope, truth, personal satisfaction, and pleasure.

But what they experienced in the life of Jesus Christ and in the teachings about His words and actions stood above all these philosophers and gods. They were transformed by the word because in it they found the Truth. In the apostles' teaching they found the ultimate source of hope, meaning, personal satisfaction, and true joy. Is it any wonder, then, that they centered their highest priorities on knowing more about Jesus? And is there really much difference between their situation and ours?

The end of the twentieth century finds us confronted with all sorts of claims about the nature and source of truth. Innumerable voices offer us empty promises of happiness and joy if only we would follow them. In such a time, it is imperative that we be immersed in the word of God. Otherwise, what is to keep us from being "swept away by every kind of doctrine."

- Pray that the Brethren would be people of uncommon devotion to God's word.
- Pray that the Spirit would move us to find the life that Scripture offers.
- Pray that we would be devoted to follow Jesus no matter what the cost.
- Pray that we would be so immersed in the Truth that no false teaching would have a chance to appeal to us.

Devote yourselves to the apostles' teaching. [✝]

# 7 Reasons to Pray

By Victor M. Parachin

AFTER A SERIES of major crises, a man whose success as an attorney was well known in his community returned to the church of his youth, hoping to find peace of spirit. When a mid-week Bible study group was announced, he joined. During one session, members were examining the teaching of Jesus on prayer as found in Matthew 6:8—". . . your Father already knows what you need before you ask him."

When that verse was read, the man asked: "Why pray if God already knows? Why bother with prayer if God is indeed all-knowing and ready to help?" His questions evoked a lively discussion.

While it is true that God knows our needs even before we make them known, the Bible still stresses the importance of prayer. Here are seven reasons why Christians should regularly offer prayers to God.

1 ***Prayer connects us to God and to God's power.*** "When we pray, we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power that spins the universe," wrote Dr. Alexis Carrel, the surgeon-biologist who won the 1912 Nobel Peace Prize for his pioneering research making it possible to perform blood transfusions safely.

This distinguished scientist observed: "In prayer, human beings seek to augment their finite energy by addressing themselves to the Infinite source of all energy. Whenever we address God in fervent prayer, we change both soul and body for the better. It could not happen that any man or woman could pray for a single moment without some good result."

2 ***Prayer is a way of sharing our burden.*** There are some problems which we find difficult, if not impossible, to share with another human being. The issue may be so intimate, involving shame or guilt, that it is impossible to confide in a relative or friend. Here prayer is the answer.

That is the thought behind the words of Joseph Scriven's popular hymn:

*What a Friend we have in Jesus,*
*All our sins and griefs to bear!*
*What a privilege to carry*
*Everything to God in prayer!*

3 ***Prayer puts into words what troubles us.*** There can be no resolution to a difficulty until it is identified and articulated. In fact, recent research indicates that talking about our pain is a medicine which heals. Dr. James Pennebaker, a professor of psychology at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, says that confiding in others leads to healing. His research shows that people who speak about their traumas release negatively charged feelings and live healthier lives.

Dr. Pennebaker cites the simple act of keeping a journal. Those who wrote out their traumatic experiences had fewer trips to the doctor, fewer health complaints, and fewer drugs prescribed than people who did not keep such a journal. Because of his research, Dr. Pennebaker recommends that people find ways to verbalize and ventilate life's hurts. Prayer is an effective way of doing that.

4 ***Prayer reduces feelings of helplessness.*** Sometimes life can leave us feeling as though events are out of our control. When that happens, it is easy to feel both helpless and hopeless.

*Mr. Parachin is a free-lance writer who lives in Virginia Beach, Va.*

Then, prayer is often the first step of action whereby we reclaim our lives and put order into chaos. Dr. Carrel observed:

> Prayer is the most powerful form of energy one can generate. It is a force as real as terrestrial gravity. As a physician, I have seen men, after all other therapy had failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer.

5 ***Prayer is a powerful reminder we are not alone.*** Life's traumas always leave us feeling isolated, lonely and vulnerable. For that reason the scripture is consistent in reminding us that we are not left to manage alone in the universe. In the Old Testament we read:

> Do not be afraid—I will save you. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you. For I am the LORD your God . . . who saves you. *Isaiah 43:1–3*

And in the New Testament, Jesus promises: "I will be with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

6 ***Prayer generates courage in the face of calamity.*** On February 3, 1966, navy pilot Gerald Coffee was shot down over the Gulf of Tonkin. Beaten and tortured, Coffee would spend seven years in solitary confinement. He vividly recalls the terror of his first days: "That heavy wooden cell door slammed shut and for the first time in my life I was completely alone and isolated in a totally hostile environment."

Just as the sheer fear threatened to overwhelm him, Coffee saw this two-word prayer another prisoner had scratched onto the cell wall: "God = strength." He says that inscription saved his life by infusing him with the courage he needed to deal with his dilemma.

7 ***Prayer is a way of sifting through personal crisis.*** Turning to prayer during a time of great trial helps us focus and sort through the myriad of issues. It can give us a sense of direction. New York psychiatrist Frederic Flach calls prayer the "most vital ingredient" for coping with personal crisis. In his book, *Resilience,* Dr. Flach says that prayer "reminds us there can be a design for our lives that we may not fully grasp but that we can live up to if we move with events as they evolve."

NOW that you have finished reading this article, why not retreat to a quiet place and unburden your heart to God. If you feel as though you have lost your way, express to God in simple sentences what has transpired and what you need.

If your burden is so great that tears rather than words flow, keep in mind this statement by Augustine: "Prayer is a question of groaning rather than speaking, tears rather than words. For He sets our tears in His sight, and our groaning is not hidden from Him who made all things." [✝]

# Reaching Out To Your Neighborhood

By Ronald J. Sider

*Do you ever read about the wonderful outreach and service programs of some large churches in the U.S. or abroad, then throw up your hands in despair, thinking your small congregation could never carry out such a program. If so, the following may cause you to change your mind.*

OKAY, I've heard stories about these wonderful wholistic ministry programs at churches like . . . . But how could my congregation ever start that kind of big, exciting, comprehensive ministry? The little circle of committed people in my church could never start that kind of program. It all seems too big and complex and expensive.

Do you feel like this? I know many people do, but there's a simple solution. You don't have to start big. In fact, starting small is the way to go.

### Jesus Action

Let me tell you about *Jesus Action,* which Ichthus Fellowship in London started about 20 years ago. *Jesus Action* is not complex or political. Ichthus simply posts signs around the neighborhood inviting people to call the *Jesus Action* phone number if they need help. Ichthus volunteers then respond to the various requests. They help with gardening, shopping, babysitting or just visiting. People without transportation can get a free ride to the hospital. It doesn't take much training and almost anyone can do it.

They never force Jesus on those they serve. Faith Forster, a leader in the Ichthus Fellowship, says, "We don't go in and start pushing them to become Christians." But eventually, people ask questions and many have come to faith in Christ.

One day a woman who had just left a hospital called *Jesus Action.* A single parent, she needed to shop for food and wash her clothes, and she didn't know how to get her six-year-old into school.

Somewhere she had seen the *Jesus Action* number that Ichthus

---

*Dr. Sider is Professor of Theology and Culture at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and president of Evangelicals for Social Action. This article is based on his new book,* Cup of Water, Bread of Life, *published by Zondervan in 1994. The article was provided by the publisher.*

*"All God is asking today is for you to decide with a few friends that you really could offer 'Jesus smiles' and helping hands to a neighbor in need."*

posts everywhere. "Is this *Jesus Action?*" she asked Faith over the telephone.

"Yes," Faith responded.

"Well," the woman went on, "I want the *action* but I don't want the *Jesus.* I don't want anyone ramming religion down my throat." Faith assured her that would not happen. After Faith helped her with the washing and shopping, the woman invited her to sit down for a cup of tea.

Ten minutes later, the woman blurted out: "OK, what's all this about Jesus?"

Teasingly, Faith reminded her, "We had an arrangement not to shove religion down your throat." The woman insisted, and Faith shared the gospel and prayed with her.

Evangelistic opportunities often result from simply caring for people's needs. Every three months, Ichthus has a supper for those who have been helped by *Jesus Action.* Afterward, they share the gospel. Some begin to come to church as a result.

Today Ichthus Fellowship has a large program with a variety of evangelistic and social ministries. But they didn't start big. The same is true for virtually all the large, comprehensive, wholistic ministries that rightly inspire us today.

## Dayspring

June Kelsall operates several residential homes for abused women in Auckland, New Zealand. It started in a small interdenominational women's praise group. June and the others began to sense a call to go into "the highways and byways." For six months they prayed for direction. They felt led to organize a drop-in center where people could drink tea and chat. "We all felt we were capable of making tea and smiling Jesus smiles and caring for people."

June is grateful they did not have to start big: "If the Lord had given us great big instructions, we probably would have run the other way." From that small beginning, Dayspring has developed into a program that includes three residential homes for poor women—often the victims of abuse—and their children. Most of the hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual funding comes from secular sources, including government agencies. But all the staff and board members are Christians from area churches. "The sort of care we give," June says, "is love with no strings attached. They don't *have* to come to the Lord, but they do!"

## How to get started

It's not hard to start a simple Jesus Action program in your church. All you need is half a dozen ordinary folks who love Jesus and want to share his love with real people in need, and a phone number where messages can be left. Let each person agree to volunteer at least two hours per week in responding to calls for help. Pray together, and have one person praying at the time each person responds to a call.

Post signs in your neighborhood (or some nearby area where there are needy people): "NEED HELP? Call Jesus Action," and give the phone number. Don't pretend to be able to handle every problem. Refer difficult ones to social service agencies or professional care-givers, and go along the first time to be sure they get help.

You don't need to do an elaborate evangelism training program to get started. After you have helped a person, ask them, "Is there any special way you would like me to pray for you?" People are often delighted to have someone pray for them.

### Practical Ways to Help a Neighbor in Need

- ♥ Get information for them on local support groups.
- ♥ Provide a meal for them.
- ♥ Take them out for a meal.
- ♥ Make telephone calls for them.
- ♥ Answer their telephone for them at their time of loss.
- ♥ Help their children with homework.
- ♥ Drive children to school and to other activities.
- ♥ Baby-sit their children.
- ♥ Clean their house.
- ♥ Drive them to church.
- ♥ Mow their lawn.
- ♥ Take letters or packages to the post office for them.
- ♥ Take them home-grown fruit or vegetables.
- ♥ Telephone before going to the grocery to check for needs.
- ♥ Ask if you can place their name on the prayer list of a congregation or prayer group.

*By M. Gregory Richards, author of* ***When Someone You Know is Hurting: What You Can Do to Help*** *(Zondervan/Harper Paperbacks, 1994).*

## Almost any church could do it

Almost any church could start this kind of simple Jesus Action program in the next three months. Usually, one thing will lead to another, and your church may develop one or more larger programs to get at frequently recurring, underlying problems you will discover as you do the Jesus Action ministry. As you develop ongoing personal friendships with the people served, people will come to Christ. Your church will probably grow.

But you don't need to worry now about what might happen in coming years. That will take care of itself. All God is asking today is for you to decide with a few friends that you really could offer "Jesus smiles" and helping hands to a neighbor in need. Photocopy a few dozen simple notices, post them, and you are off and running.

Imagine what might happen if this year, in a dozen local churches, small teams started this kind of ministry! What if it happened in a hundred churches? Or a thousand? [⇧]



Understanding the Bible

# The Hermeneutical Community

By Brenda B. Colijn

ONE OF THE GREAT LEGACIES of the Protestant Reformation is the right of all believers to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. Unfortunately, some of the descendants of the Reformation, particularly in America, have understood this to mean that when we read the Bible, any opinion about its meaning is as good as any other. "What it means to me" is all that counts.

But what do we do as a church when we have a question about doctrine or practice or a conflict between interpretations? In a hierarchical environment, the church leadership decides. In a democratic or pluralistic environment, congregations and individuals go their own way. Brethren have tried to live by a third approach that holds the individual and the church in tension—an approach that has been called the hermeneutical community.

The hermeneutical community is a form of corporate biblical interpretation in which the gathered body discusses issues of interpretation in order to arrive at a Spirit-led consensus on matters of faith and practice. *How Brethren Understand God's Word* expresses it this way: "As part of our commitment to one another, Brethren read Scripture together to help one another understand and obey it" (p. 6).

## Biblical Basis

The hermeneutical community is one expression of the responsibilities we have toward one another as members of Christ's body. It enables us to achieve the unity of mind that God's word commands us to have (Acts 4:32; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 2:1–2).

Colossians 3:12–17 describes the attitudes and actions that make up this dynamic:

> *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*
>
> *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* (NIV)

Thus, we are to teach one another from the word of Christ in humility and love, bearing with one another as we work toward unity. A growing unity in the faith and in the knowledge of Christ should be evident as the body of Christ functions properly to build itself up to maturity (Eph. 4:13).

The early church showed this approach in action when it dealt with the thorny problem of how to admit Gentiles into the church (Acts 15:1–35). The church in Antioch sent Paul, Barnabas, and some other believers to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. The apostles and elders received their input and discussed the issue in light of Scripture and what God was doing in their midst. Then "the apostles and elders, with the whole church" decided to send some of their own people to the Gentile believers in Antioch along with a letter containing their decision about the issue (v. 22). The apostles and elders took the lead in decision-making, but they involved the whole church in the process.

## Brethren Practice

Brethren have always had the confidence that we could find the "mind of Christ" about matters of faith and practice by discussing them in the light of Scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit, who would "guide [us] into all truth" (1 Cor. 2:14–16; John 16:13).

Michael Franz describes this process among the eighteenth-century Brethren:

> *When they come together in the meetings they display among themselves a childlike, simple, humble reverence in order to appear before their great majestic king, Lord and God Sabaoth, and to be taught by Him and not by men. It is Christ who speaks through them; therefore it is not the word of man but rather the word of God. They also accept it as God's word and the Word grows in them as a seed sowed by God in a well prepared field of the heart. Because it is the same kind of seed, it therefore grows to the same knowledge of the Son of God to be one heart and one soul with one another because then they have one heart, soul and knowledge, and recognize together one evangelical foundation according to the truth. Thus one serves the other with the gift which he has received, they are subject one to the other in the fear of God, and hold fast to humility.* (The Brethren in Colonial America, p. 450.)

This description shows several commitments necessary for the func-

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*Dr. Colijn is a member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church in Worthington, Ohio. She chairs The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

***"The hermeneutical community is a form of corporate biblical interpretation in which the gathered body discusses issues of interpretation in order to arrive at a Spirit-led consensus"***

tioning of the hermeneutical community: reverence toward God; a humble, teachable spirit; an expectation that God will speak through the gathered community; a desire to grow in the word; a common evangelical foundation; mutual service; mutual submission; and a goal of unity in heart, soul, and mind.

Throughout our history, our practice of bringing questions to Annual Meeting or General Conference grows out of this concept of the hermeneutical community. Although Annual Meeting did not always live up to this ideal, the impulse behind it was that the larger body could be trusted to resolve questions of faith and practice by searching the Scriptures together.

In the 1880s, our own branch of the Brethren (the Progressives) rebelled when the decisions of Annual Meeting were made binding on all Brethren. However, in our reaction against one distortion of the hermeneutical community, we sometimes fell prey to another—the American individualism that puts personal opinion above the consensus of the larger body.

We have been trying to work out a balance ever since. We have attempted to live out the idea of the hermeneutical community in recent discussions about issues of faith and practice—for example, in our discussions of baptism and ordination, as well as in our development of the *Centennial Statement* and the statement on biblical interpretation, *How Brethren Understand God's Word.*

## Theological Significance

The hermeneutical community is one aspect of the priesthood of all believers. It is also an extension of the biblical concept of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5–8; 1 Cor. 12:12–31). As such, it is neither a monarchy nor a democracy, neither hierarchical nor purely congregational. It recognizes the diversity of the body but strives to maintain its unity. It also recognizes the interdependence of the body. The gathered body in union with its Head, Jesus Christ, has a wisdom which any single member lacks, but to which each member contributes. This approach also respects the wisdom of those who have been gifted by God and trained to pastor, teach, and lead the body.

The hermeneutical community counters the excessive individualism of our culture. While it recognizes the importance of each individual and allows each individual a voice, it also requires each individual to submit to Christ and to other believers.

## Practical Application

Putting the hermeneutical community into practice requires five commitments on our part. ***First***, this community can exist only among those who share the same biblical and theological foundation and have a common commitment to Jesus Christ. We Brethren have been working to clarify our foundation with such documents as the *Centennial Statement* and *How Brethren Understand God's Word.*

***Second***, it requires the intentional education and encouragement of all believers in order for all members of the body to take part. ***Third***, it requires hard work, a willingness to search the Scriptures and spend time in discussion and concerted prayer. Uninformed opinions and personal preferences are not enough.

***Fourth***, it requires a willingness to listen to one another, learn from one another, and confront one another in love. We must sometimes be willing to acknowledge that someone's interpretation—even our own—is inadequate or wrong. Remember that the aim isn't just sharing feelings or opinions, but arriving at the truth (see Eph. 4:14–16).

***Fifth***, it requires mutual submission (Eph. 5:21). This is not a one-way submission to the one in office or the one with the greatest education or the traditional way of doing things or the largest number or the loudest voice. This is a mutual trust that engages in no suspicion of persons or motives. It asks us to bear with one another when we disagree and to have patience with the consensus process. It requires that we submit to the decision of the larger body when consensus has been reached, even if our position was not adopted. It allows no hidden agendas, no punitive actions, and no grudge-keeping.

The hermeneutical community can be practiced at all levels of the church. In the local church, pastors can allow some time for congregational dialogue about sermons. Sunday school classes can be times for discussion, not just for listening to a lesson. Men's and women's groups can address issues of importance to the larger church. Small group Bible studies are a particularly effective context in which to interpret the Bible together and bring it to bear on issues of practical living. Such groups can build both community and accountability as we try to be faithful to the word together.

We could make time for Bible studies and discussion at district and General Conference, at pastors' conferences, and at meetings of the auxiliaries. We can also model this approach at the national level as we work through issues of faith and practice, and as we seek God's will for the future of our denomination.

The Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication hopes that this series of articles will be one avenue where corporate interpretation can take place. We welcome correspondence to carry the discussion forward.* This article itself incorporates suggestions from correspondence we received.

As we read the Bible together, we will find that "what it means to me" is less important—and less satisfying—than "what it means to us, guided by God's Spirit." Let's make the hermeneutical community a reality in The Brethren Church! [⇧]

*If you have suggestions, comments, or questions for the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, please send them to the committee in care of The Brethren Evangelist, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

# The Woman's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Woman's Missionary Society

January–February 1995 Volume 8, Number 3

## The President's Pen

Dear Ladies,

I trust your holidays were times full of fun and fellowship with family and friends. Our family was all together between Christmas and New Year's. Our son, Glenn, married Sarah Hollewell on New Year's Eve at the Ashland University Chapel, so now I have three daughters-in-law, and I love them as my own daughters. We love being together for the holidays or for any time at all. With seven grandchildren, it makes for a fun time.

I read a story in a devotional book about a "Leaky Roof." A man, driving down the road, stopped when he saw a farmer looking at the ruins of his barn. The man asked what happened and the farmer replied, "Roof fell in. Leaked so long it finally rotted through."

"Why didn't you fix it?" asked the man.

"Well, see," replied the farmer, "it just seemed I never did get around to it. When the weather was good, there weren't no need for it. And when it rained, it was too wet to work on!"

It is easy for us to think, "Someday I'll live for Christ and let Him have complete control of my life." This attitude is no different than the farmer's. In Matthew 7:24 we read, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock." That's the secret of building a "good roof" as well as laying a solid foundation of strong Christian character.

As we begin a new year, now is a good time to give your life completely over to Christ. Allow Him to lead and guide you in all of your everyday decisions and actions. You will begin building a strong foundation for your Christian life.

Has your society been looking over the WMS Constitution? Make sure you take time to do this and send any suggested changes to your district president. Thanks to the societies that sent

*(continued on page 3)*

## WHO IS YOUR LEADER?

Text: *And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.* Matthew 2:9

Christmas is over, gifts and decorations are put away, and even the manger scene is back in the box. A few weeks ago, I thought about each part of the traditional manger scene package—the cattle, a few sheep, the scraggly shepherds, and the well-dressed wise men. How shall I arrange them this year around the Holy Family? Now they are neatly packaged again.

Conversely to our modern-day pageants, the shepherds and the wise men were not at the manger at the same time.

According to the Scriptures, the angel spoke to certain shepherds—not to all who were in the field—caring for their sheep and protecting them from the wild animals lurking in the dark. The shepherds were supposed to be brave men, but the brightness of the angel dazzled and frightened them. "Fear not," the angel said, "for unto you . . ." My paraphrase is, "Jesus is with you; don't be afraid." (We teach this truth to our children, too.) The shepherds hurried and found Jesus in the manger at Bethlehem.

After Jesus was born, the wise men in the east saw the shining star. They studied the skies and read the Old Testament prophets; hence, they were acquainted with the prophecy of the Messiah. They believed the dazzling star foretold the Messiah's birth.

They expected the King to be born in Jerusalem, the city of David, so they traveled by camel to find Him. After inquiring of King Herod, they followed the star; they found Him; and they bowed down and worshiped Him.

We can only assume the star led others to seek Him, but the wonderful fact is that we don't have to follow the star. He is here! He became flesh and dwelt among us! When He ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to live within us!

Today, instead of following the star, we follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who leads us daily. What kind of sheep are we? Cute and fuzzy, obedient, appreciative of green grass and cool water; or disobedient, wayward, falling over the cliff, getting caught in brambles? Jesus the Good Shepherd reclaims us from sin and gently cares, provides, and loves us.

Aren't we blessed because we follow Jesus, not a star?

## Missionary Miscellany

Jim Black, Executive Director of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, and Reilly Smith, Director-elect, will visit India and Malaysia in January and February. This initial trip for Reilly is important for both him and Jim, as well as for the national missionaries. They appreciate your prayers.

The missionaries for January are our friends in Colombia, South America: Dave and Diane Kerner and their children Erin, Joel, Karla; and Ken and Carolyn Solomon. The Kerners live in Bogotá and the Solomons are in Medellín. Both are very large and beautiful cities, but both are very dangerous cities. Pray for their physical health as well as their safety.

The February missionaries of the month are three families engaged in Home Mission churches: Rickey and Glenda Bolden and their children Joshua, Caleb, and Leah at the Southeast Christian Fellowship in Washington, DC; Mark Logan at the 340 Brethren Church in Elkton, VA; and Charlie and Linda Beekley and their son, Tim, at Mountain View Brethren

*(continued on page 4)*

# W.M.S. DIRECTORY — 1995

## NATIONAL W.M.S. OFFICERS

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Vice President — Mrs. Judy Tinkel, 308 S. Main St., Milford, IN 46542. Phone: 219-658-4269

General Secretary — Mrs. Nancy Hunn, 555 W. Market St., Nappanee, IN 46550. Phone: 219-773-5578

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Sewing and World Relief Coordinator — Mrs. Joan Merrill, 9300 S. St. Rt. 3, Muncie, IN 43702. Phone: 317-289-2384

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## LOCAL SOCIETIES

### Names and Addresses of W.M.S. Presidents

*** From last year's Directory; no new information.**

### Florida District

Sarasota Day — June Shaw, 625 Caruso Pl., Sarasota, FL 34237

Sarasota Evening — Eileen Higgins, 3176 Aspinwall St., Sarasota, FL 34237

### Southeastern District

Bethlehem Mary and Martha — Susan Kidd, Rt. 1, Box 24, Bridgewater, VA 22812. Phone: 703-828-4987

Bethlehem Senior — Mae L. Wenger, Rt. 1, Box 204, Linville, VA 22834. Phone: 703-833-5561

Cumberland — Vergie E. Greenawalt, 917 Maryland Ave., Cumberland, MD 21502. Phone: 301-724-1105

Hagerstown — Mary (Jackie) Rogers, 122 S. Locust St., Hagerstown, MD 21740. Phone: 301-797-4334

Linwood — Virginia M. Hook, 3046 Old Washington Rd., Westminster, MD 21157. Phone: 410-848-5587

Maurertown — Elsie Mogle, Rt. 1, Box 199E, Woodstock, VA 22664. Phone: 703-459-3204

Mt. Olive — Mabel Bailey, Rt. 1, Box 285, Port Republic, VA 24471. Phone: 703-249-5175

Oak Hill — Amy L. Crouch, 140 Virginia St., Oak Hill, WV 25901. Phone: 304-465-8380

Southeast Christian Fellowship — Helen B. Cooksey (Acting), 1111 Clark Ave., Waldorf, MD 20602. Phone: 301-843-8994

St. James — *Myra Poffenberger, 17815 Gardenview Rd., Hagerstown, MD 21740

St. Luke — Carol Coffman, Rt. 2, Box 141A, Woodstock, VA 22664. Phone: 703-459-3668

### Pennsylvania District

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Cameron — Joy Anderson, Rt. 1, Box 169, Aleppo, PA 15310. Phone: 412-428-5238

Fairless Hills — Alice Zimmerman, 171 S. Myrtlewood Ave., Langhorne, PA 19047

Highland — Marilyn Reynard, 583 Highland Ridge Rd., Marianna, PA 15345

Johnstown II — Joy Zook, 179 Bond St., Johnstown, PA 15902

Johnstown III — Dolores Golby, 1781 Goucher St., Apt. 402, Johnstown, PA 15905

Main Street — Helen Courtney, 336 North St., Meyersdale, PA 15552

Masontown — Mildred Wheeler, 701 North Main St., Masontown, PA 15461

Mt. Olivet — Madlyn Davis, Rt. 1, Box 249, Georgetown, DE 19947

Pleasant View — Nancy McGraw, 1491 Hancock Ave., Apollo, PA 15613-8407

Raystown — Bonita Chamberlain, Rt. 1, Saxton, PA 16678

Sarver — Marsha Nulph, 361 Stoneyhollow Rd., Cabot, PA 16023. Phone: 412-352-3528

Sergeantsville — Mrs. James Culberson, P. O. Box 67, Sergeantsville, NJ 08557

Valley — Vera Schroyer, Rt. 3, Box 449, Acme, PA 15610

Vinco — Brenna Mackall, Rt. 1, Box 284, Mineral Point, PA 15942

White Dale — *Rita Varner, P. O. Box 414, Kingwood, WV 26537

### Ohio District

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Garber — Donna Stoffer, 1509 Old Post Rd., Ashland, OH 44805. Phone: 419-281-3710

Gratis — Ruth Focht, 8947 S. Preble County Line Rd., Germantown, OH 45327. Phone: 513-787-3860

Gretna Gleaners — Nettie Hudson, 4653 C.R. 11, Bellefontaine, OH 43311. Phone: 513-592-9163

Gretna Lamplighters — Susan Bechtel, 4165 C.R. 13, Bellefontaine, OH 43311. Phone: 513-592-9163

Hillcrest — *Marijane Stanley, 923 Brittany Hills Dr., Dayton, OH 45459-1520

Newark — Florence Crist, 66 Raw Ave., Newark, OH 43055. Phone: 614-354-2034

New Lebanon Afternoon — Jane Metzger, 1 Lawson Ave., New Lebanon, OH 45345. Phone: 513-687-1186

New Lebanon Evening — Marva Phelps, 11329 Little Richmond Rd., Brookville, OH 45309. Phone: 513-687-1004

North Georgetown — Evelyn Romigh, 26009 Georgetown Rd., Homeworth, OH 44634. Phone: 216-525-7404

North Georgetown Evening — *Wanda Powell, 2090 Tanglewood Ave., Alliance, OH 44601

Park St. Faith — Pauline Benshoff, 1317 Lake Dr., Ashland, OH 44805. Phone: 419-962-4646

Park St. Hope — JoAnn Seaman, 1314 Davis Rd., Ashland, OH 44805. Phone: 419-281-0027

Park St. Joy — Janet Rufener, 128 Lilac

Lane, Ashland, OH 44805. Phone: 419-289-0465
Smithville — *Karen Troyer, 456 W. Main St., Smithville, OH 44677
Trinity Jr. — Sharon L. Dixon, 633 Buckwalter Ave., Massillon, OH 44646. Phone: 216-832-2074
Trinity Sr. — Arlene Heist, 1245 Manor Ave., SW, Canton, OH 44710. Phone: 216-477-3505
West Alexandria I — Marilyn Ward, 2356 New Market Banta Rd., West Alexandria, OH 45381. Phone: 513-839-4204
West Alexandria II — Marti Sorrell, 128 E. High St., Eaton, OH 45320. Phone: 513-456-9358
Williamstown — Barbara Main, 6781 S.R. 12 W., Findlay, OH 45840. Phone: 419-422-3069

**Indiana District**

Ardmore — Kathy Galbreath, 23674 St. Rd. 2, South Bend, IN 46619. Phone: 219-232-6179
Brighton Chapel I, Day — Leona Long, 5455 N. 610 E., Howe, IN 46746. Phone: 219-562-3074
Bryan — Anna M. Moog, 630 S. Walnut St., Bryan, OH 43506
Bryan Susanna — Ann Cummins, Rt. 2, 17-420-17F, Bryan, OH 43506. Phone: 419-636-4054
Burlington — Cindi Stout, Rt. 1, Box 215, Frankfort, IN 46041. Phone: 317-566-3217
College Corner — Tamie White, 2817 W. 850 S., Wabash, IN 46992. Phone: 217-981-4557
Corinth — Lois Thomson, Rt. 5, Box 229B, Logansport, IN 46947. Phone: 219-663-2729
County Line — *Dianna Phillips, 12823 Walnut Hill Dr., Lakeville, IN 46536
Dutchtown — Sandy Sharp, 681 E. May St., Leesburg, IN 46538. Phone: 219-834-4601
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Loree I — Doris Deisch, Rt. 1, Box 89, Peru, IN 46870. Phone: 317-473-6052
Loree II Charity — *Marcia Payne, Rt. 5, Box 15A, Peru, IN 46970
Meadow Crest — Corine Austin, 8840 St. Joe Rd., Fort Wayne, IN 46835. Phone: 219-485-5654
Mexico — Jennifer Keyes, Box 56, Mexico, IN 46980. Phone: 317-985-3289
Milford — Deanna Ladd, 863 N. Timberline Cir. E., Warsaw, IN 46580. Phone: 219-267-6817
Nappanee — *Bonnie Hertsler, 652 Miami Dr., Nappanee, IN 46550
New Paris — Eleanore Morehouse, 19185 US 6, New Paris, IN 46553. Phone: 219-831-2286
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North Manchester Joy — Joyce McBride, 903 East St., North Manchester, IN 46962. Phone: 219-982-6422
Oakville — Joan Merrill, 9300 S. SR 3, Muncie, IN 47302. Phone: 317-289-2384
Peru — Rosalyn Roller, 470 W. 14th St., Peru, IN 46970. Phone: 317-473-7096
Roann — Sandra Medsger, P.O. Box 246, Roann, IN 46974. Phone: 317-833-7691
Roanoke — Sharon Williams, Box 33, Roanoke, IN 46783. Phone: 219-672-3252
South Bend — Eleanor Porte, 540 E. Oakside, South Bend, IN 46614. Phone: 219-291-6337
Tiosa — *Carol Scott, 4137 E. 550 N., Rochester, IN 46975
Wabash — Phyllis Meyer, 6855 W. 200 N. St. 30, Wabash, IN 46992. Phone: 219-563-1238
Warsaw — Lee Bair, 619 Nancy, Warsaw, IN 46580. Phone: 219-267-2659

**Central District**

Cerro Gordo — Elaine Dresbach, Box 354, LaPlace, IL 61936
Hammond Ave. — Ruby Williams, 1930 Howard Ave., Waterloo, IA 50702
Lanark Neoma — Pauline Erbsen, Rt. 2, Box 207, Lanark, IL 61046
Lanark Friendship — Sharon Witt, Rt. 1, Box 1, Lanark, IL 61046
Milledgeville Beacons — Dorothy Ruth Glenn, P.O. Box 385, Milledgeville, IL 61051
Milledgeville Priscilla — Wendy Wiersema, Rt. 2, Box 216, Chadwick, IL 61014

**Midwest District**

Derby Dorcas — *Marie Rauber, 2307 S. Broadview, Wichita KS 67218
Falls City — Audrey Bennett, 2010 Fair Ave., Falls City, NE 68355
Fort Scott —
Mulvane — Dorothy Mills, 504 Emery, Mulvane, KS 67110

**Southwest District**

Tucson Evening — Iris McKinney, 6717 Calle Mercurio, Tucson, AZ 85710
Tucson Faith, Hope, Charity — Freda Lawson, 3328 N. Richey Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85716

**Northern California District**

Stockton — Audrey Steyer, 3634 Monitor Circle S., Stockton, CA 95219

**WMS PROJECT**
**1995–95**
**FUNDS for TRAINING MALAYSIAN PASTORS**
**(second year)**

## The President's Pen *(continued)*

in news items to Joan Ronk for the *Newsletter*. It is always interesting to read what other societies are doing, and it may give ideas to other groups of fun and interesting things to do at their meetings and programs. Keep the news coming!

In the last *Outlook Newsletter*, the names and addresses of Home Mission churches were printed. Why not send them a card from time to time and just encourage them in their work? I know they would appreciate hearing from you.

Until next time, remember "Character is one thing we build in this world that we carry into the next."

God Bless You,
Shirley Black

# *In Memoriam*

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

### W.M.S. Members Deceased During 1993–1994

**SOUTHEAST DISTRICT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Maurertown | Margaret Malone |
| Hagerstown | Ruth Stoddard |

**PENNSYLVANIA DISTRICT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Masontown | Caroline West |
| Johnstown Third | Charlotte Vitalie |
| | Alice Grumbling |
| | Violet Grumbling |
| | Alberta Jones |
| Pleasant View | Martha Stewart |
| Johnstown Second | Ruth Ely |
| | Patricia Rhodes |

**OHIO DISTRICT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Trinity Senior | Evelyn Speirs |
| Gretna Lamplighters | Margery Tanger |
| Gratis | Kay Zimmerman |
| New Lebanon Afternoon | Rosalie Miller |
| Park St. Faith | Helen Shively |

**INDIANA DISTRICT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Goshen | Adeline Miller |
| Bryan | Beulah Ridenour |
| | Anna Obermeyer |
| | Frances Miller |
| | Waiva Taylor |
| Ardmore | Bertha Wyatt |
| | Lucille Daniels |
| | Gretchen Smith |
| North Manchester Hadassah | Martha Dickerhoff |
| | Mary Gresham |
| South Bend | Agnes Rose |
| | Leona Seeley |
| Dutchtown | Mary Fidler |
| Oakville I | Edith Haddin |

**CENTRAL DISTRICT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Cerro Gordo | Faryl Stuart |
| | Loretta Metzger |

**FLORIDA DISTRICT**

| | |
|---|---|
| Sarasota Day | Irene Lutz |

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

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THE WOMAN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Woman's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

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## Missionary Miscellany *(cont.)*

Church in Frederick, MD. Share your encouragement, love, and prayers with these families. And pray for their groups of worshipers, that followers of the Lord Jesus will remain faithful.



The following letter was received just before the dedication of the addition on the Northwest Chapel in Tucson. This small congregation was the recipient of the Growth Partners Call, which is received and administered through the Missionary Board. When you read the last paragraph, you will know why our pastors need our prayers.

October 17, 1994

Dear Joan,

Life here has been very hectic. Our two boys, now 9 and 11, keep us very busy with school and sports. When you add to that the building project, four Bible studies between David and me, his duties as a pastor, and my job as a secretary, sometimes it's miraculous just that we see each other at all!

The building is indeed going very well. Just two weeks till dedication. I don't know exactly where we are with Growth Partners, but I have been told that giving is exceeding past averages. As the building grows, excitement and energy increases in the Body as well. We have had two baptisms in the last five months, with five children and six adults baptized and becoming members. God is adding some true "leaders" to this church, and their gifts are already being seen and felt. It's as though there is an energy in the air, like the feeling before a storm breaks, but a feeling of excitement rather than tension. David and I feel very fortunate to be a part of this work.

My job as a secretary at the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind is going well. I work three-quarter time, which allows me to see the boys off to school most days, and most often I can be here after school when they get home.

That pretty much brings you up to date on us. I really do love being a pastor's wife, though sometimes it's a real strain on our personal lives. Unlike other couples, we can't say, "Boy, we've been working really hard—we've hardly seen each other. How about a family weekend away?" Since I work Monday–Friday, a mid-week break is pretty tough to do. But God always works things out for us to recharge. He truly does provide all our needs!

In Christ,

Dawn West

450 W. Cool Drive, Apt. 120

Tucson, AZ 85704

# District Doings

Three Indiana district rallies were held during October. Cindi Stout welcomed the southern district ladies to Burlington. The theme verse was "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:5a). Cindy Scott of Corinth gave the devotions, acting out different stages of life while growing up. She emphasized how we need to hold firm to Christ throughout life. Mary Bilbee presented a poem, "If You Stand Very Still."

Marilyn Aspinall, Bryan, returned missionary from Argentina, was the special speaker. She talked about the culture shock she has suffered since being back in the States. She mentioned that in Argentina broken homes are very few. In fact, they are very family-oriented. They are together for birthdays, anniversaries, etc. And life is less hectic there.

Marilyn shared her theme verse, Psalm 85:8. She emphasized that we should do good all the days of our lives and prefer others over ourselves. She left us with the question, "Are we willing to suffer for Jesus?"

Special music for the day was given by Marjorie Newell; a trio of Susie Stout, Joyce McCarty, and Ethel Naff; and other music by Carol Brewster, Susan Gregory, Marion Bargerhuff, and Deloris Hattery.

At College Corner ladies were welcomed by Ruth Hullinger and Tami White. Helen Garner of North Manchester gave the devotions on the theme, "A Woman's Touch." She spoke about the four women who worshiped Jesus and the touch that should be a part of each life: the eagerness of Mary to learn as much about Jesus as she could; the molding of Christian principles, as Ruth did; the sacrifice of Mary; and the prayer life of Anna.

Sandy Medsger and Ursula Abell of Roann sang. The speaker was Linda Gaust. She said that our homes and churches become a body of believers when they are touched with love. Women have a way of adding an extra something.

The northern rally was in Warsaw. The theme for the day was "Jesus, the Master Recycler." Norma Trump from North Manchester was the devotional leader. She portrayed Peter's mother-in-law, using several scriptures and solos. Following lunch, Ann Van Duyne was the special speaker, developing the theme.

Total attendance was 221 and project offerings received for ATS totaled $1,585.20. Reports of the rallies were submitted by Susie Stout, Cheryl Sigle, Evelyn Lantz, and Lois Garber.

# The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Prayers of many Americans were answered in November, when elected officials who profess and practice strong moral values replaced those with less or no values. This is not a political party problem; this is a moral problem into which the United States has slowly eroded. Although the citizens voted for a change, and we received it, the problem isn't over.

Continue to pray! Support the government officials—local, state, national—with prayer. They are in their positions as our representatives. Encourage them in their efforts to restore the basic Christian values throughout each locale. Continue or begin in your home to maintain and practice the Christian principles.

When I was growing up in Waterloo, Mrs. LaBarre, our Primary Sunday School Department Superintendent, gave each child name verses. Inside the cover of our Bibles, she wrote verses beginning with the initial of our names. My R verse was Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (*KJV*). That verse has much more meaning now than when I was young; righteousness and reproach were hard words to pronounce when I couldn't make the "r" sound, let alone comprehend. But I memorized the verse and I have learned it is true!

This is our opportunity as Christians to be shining lights and to be genuine children of God. Be firm, uncompromising, and stand on the principles of God.

The W.M.S. year is one-half completed. It is a good time to evaluate your society's progress. Plans for spring activities should be in progress; continue correspondence with the world missionaries, home mission pastors, chaplains, and special ministry personnel. All of these can experience mid-winter doldrums, just as we may. A note of encouragement will benefit the receiver as well as the sender.

Remember, we are Women Meant to Serve, so keep up your good work.

Your friend,

Joan

Joan

# Serving God and The Brethren Church Through Ashland Theological Seminary

By Dr. Frederick J. Finks



*Dr. Fred Finks, President, Ashland Theological Seminary.*

WHO could have imagined the changes that would shape Ashland Theological Seminary into a world-class evangelical seminary impacting ministry around the world? I often wonder what our forefathers had in mind when they decided that an educated clergy was important enough to challenge the status quo of the 1880s. Could they have envisioned the global technology that would allow instant communication from anywhere in the world?

## A changing world

Debate over the use of the camera occupied discussion for decades during General Conference; today images are transferred via satellite in the blink of an eye. It is too much to assume that Henry Holsinger could have had such vision as to include the advances of today. But it is not too much to assume that Holsinger and the early Brethren envisioned a changing world and the need for an educated ministry to make the gospel relevant in such a changing world.

When Ashland was selected as the headquarters for the denomination, it was very much a rural setting. Not a great deal has changed in the past one-hundred years. Ashland is still rural in nature and much less complicated than larger cities. Yet Ashland Theological Seminary is not confined to this rural setting. Ashland Theological Seminary can be found among the towering skyscrapers of Cleveland, Columbus, and Detroit. These are major metropolitan cities, and Ashland Theological Seminary is there working within the churches, providing ministry to the complex needs of modern society.

Ashland Theological Seminary has also moved into the larger evangelical scene and is now the thirteenth largest among the sixty-one evangelical seminaries. Likewise an impact has been made through the writing, publishing, and speaking of faculty members. More than 31 books have been written by ATS faculty members.

Ashland Theological Seminary is a ministry of The Brethren Church that is serving the needs of The Brethren Church as well as the greater body of Christ. This multi-dimensionality enables the word of God to be proclaimed throughout the world. More than two thousand alumni of the seminary are spreading the gospel; they do so in remote villages as well as capital cities around the globe. The gospel's influence is felt as lives are changed and as people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Students are the heartbeat of the seminary. There are more than 600 students studying this year at Ashland Theological Seminary. Brethren students number 29 this year and are an active force at the seminary. They have formed Brethren Student Fellowship, which meets regularly to discuss the future of the church and their part in helping the church to grow. Current Brethren students are planning on entering the pastoral, mission, church planting, and pastoral counseling fields. There is a genuine excitement about the future within the student body.

## An investment in ministry

The seminary depends upon the support of the church and of concerned individuals who wish to invest in this ministry. The General Conference-approved Fair Share Giving is the responsibility of every church. Likewise, the seminary needs the help of individuals who provide scholarships, endowment gifts, annual operating gifts, and long-range support through estate-planning. The future depends upon the support given today and tomorrow. Give as if the church depended upon it. It does! [⇧]



*Ashland Theological Seminary*

# Learning By Doing

By Thomas Sprowls, Jr.

PERHAPS BY NOW you have heard the good news that the foundation for a new Brethren church has been successfully laid in Medina, Ohio. Our Lord, the Master Builder, has been at work through various people over the past year and a half, developing the blueprint for this new work. Now the labor to bring these plans to reality has begun. It is through the labor of seminary students here at Ashland Theological Seminary that the first stones of the foundation have been solidly set in place.

In Mark 6:7, the writer tells us that Jesus sent His disciples out two by two. In Medina, not only has my wife Debbie gone with me to start the new church, but twelve other seminary students and their spouses are actively involved in ministry with The Brethren Church of Medina. They make up the core of the worship and drama ministry and also serve as staff for the nursery and children's church. They are also involved in Bible study, outreach, and fellowship activities. This month, several of them will be involved in the Christian education ministry as it gets off the ground.

The work of the students began back in October, when many of them were involved in making phone calls during "The Phones For You" campaign. After spending long hours helping with this outreach, students were delighted to meet people whom whey had called. The real joy came in knowing that the church now has an opportunity to reach these people for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Interest and support from the student body and faculty at Ashland Theological Seminary has been tremendous. Students from all denominations have been interested in the new church. Never has a day gone by when I have not been stopped in the hallway of the seminary and asked how the new church is doing. The conversation inevitably ends with people telling me that they have been praying for the new church and are glad God is watching over us. Several students and faculty members even went out of their way to come to the opening service to give their support.



*Tom Sprowls, pastor of The Brethren Church of Medina, is a senior at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

Ashland Theological Seminary has been invaluable to The Brethren Church of Medina. It has been the developing ground for me and all the other students involved in starting this new work. Not only this, but the initial vision for a practical way to learn church planting by starting a new church began within the walls of ATS.

The story doesn't end here. Our Lord, the Master Builder, has already sown the seed for another church to be planted through the work of students at Ashland Theological Seminary. The rumor in the hallway is that blueprints could be ready by 1997. [⇧]

*Ashland Theological Seminary*

# Life on the Streets

By Kurt Stout

"DO YOU KNOW that Jesus loves you?" Karen asks the young street boy. "I don't know about Jesus, but my mommy tells me Satan loves me," responds the boy. This conversation did not take place in Cleveland, Chicago, or Indianapolis; it took place on a street in downtown Ashland. And this is not an isolated case.

*Kurt Stout, from the Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church, is a senior at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

In large cities and small towns alike, there are scores of people who are both spiritually and physically hungry for a ray of hope. You have seen these people: the woman who stands at the intersection holding a sign that reads, "Will Work for Food"; the group of teens who gather on the streets late at night, darting in and out of the shadows; or the family in the dilapidated house on the corner, which is waiting for next month's food stamps. Whether we acknowledge them or not, these people are all around us.

A group of students from the World Christian Fellowship (W.C.F.) organization at Ashland Theological Seminary is trying to bridge the gap and break down social barriers that keep us comfortable in our own safe Christian community, isolated from these people. The "Life on the Streets" program is designed to provide students first-hand experiences and ministry opportunities in inner-city settings

that will challenge and stretch their hearts.

Assisting another ministry group, several ATS students have participated in street evangelism and social services in downtown Ashland. Each week students provide a cup of hot chocolate and some homemade cookies to passers-by or teens gathered in a nearby parking lot. In addition, tracts are handed out, a Bible study has been formed, and a prayer team meets while others are ministering on the street. The hope is that through weekly contacts such as these, the gospel of Jesus Christ may be presented and souls will be won for His Kingdom.



*Kurt Stout spends a night finding out what it's like to be homeless.*

On October 21 and 22 of this year, "Life on the Streets" took this ministry one step further. We met for prayer in a small upstairs apartment, then spread out across downtown in groups of twos and threes. Ten students passed out fliers door to door, increasing ministry awareness and inviting people to the Bible study.

After a full evening of door-to-door street ministry, we went to make our cardboard tents for the night. Our beds were not soft mattresses and pillows, but the cold, damp ground. The bitter air pierced through our thin clothing, and our bodies ached with every turn. As a result, the reality of our ministry became much clearer. We counted the hours until we could return to our comfortable homes, but we realized that other homeless individuals were counting the days, months, and years.

Time passed by ever so slowly, and few could sleep. Most of our group did not make it through the night. And the lingering backaches and colds were reminders of that long winter evening.

When the sun finally rose, we gathered our belongings and headed for a Methodist church located near the downtown area. Our ATS group was the Saturday morning breakfast crew. We helped prepare and serve breakfast to more than 40 needy people in the Ashland community. But pancakes, eggs, and ham were not the only items shared that day. We shared a piece of our heart, and we received a spiritual blessing in return. Our eyes were opened and our spirits encouraged.

In December, W.C.F. "Life on the Streets" helped box Christmas packages for needy families, and in the spring we plan to go to Cleveland to aid Cleveland City Mission in ministering to the poor and homeless in that area.

The ultimate purpose of "Life on the Streets" is not just to occasionally reach out to those in need, but to develop a mindset and burden for missions both here and abroad. Consider today what you can do to reach out to those in your area. Be prepared to be challenged, and be prepared to be blessed. The Kingdom of God is worth it all. [⇧]

*Ashland Theological Seminary*

# Answering God's Call

By Gene Oburn

"HONEY, what do you think about us going into pastoral ministry?" With those words, I nearly brought twenty-three years of a happy marriage to an end. It is one thing for a person to make a change in life, but to spring the news on someone else, especially a spouse, is a shock to that person.

DeAnn figured that the idea would soon pass. But it didn't. Two years later we were living in Ashland, Ohio, and I was enrolled in Ashland Theological Seminary. Oh yes, she had accepted the idea by this time and was totally behind me in my decision. (Our marriage was never in jeopardy.)

St. Paul wrote to the Philippians that he had learned to be content in whatever state he found himself. Perhaps the converse of that could be said of my situation. For years I had felt the prodding (not leading) of the Holy Spirit to do what, at the age of 49, I finally did—say "Yes" to God. Until that time, I just hadn't felt comfortable.

Since that time, I have had no desire to turn back. Also, I have never had so much contentment as I have had since I sought to do God's will for my life. I would not have thought that I would be going back to school for four years, but God has made that a joyful



*Gene Oburn is a senior at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

experience, as well as one that has gone by very rapidly.

He also worked in other ways to assure me that this call was genuine. We were able to purchase a home that is ideal for our time in Ashland, mainly because it has virtually no yard to mow. I was offered a job at Park Street Brethren Church even before we moved to Ashland. All I had to do was buy some books and begin attending classes at the seminary.

So in July 1991, we said goodby to friends, pulled out of our driveway at Pleasant Hill, Ohio, and headed for Ashland to begin a whole new life. DeAnn and I had spent all of our married life and reared our four children in Pleasant Hill, so we left with many memories.

In December of that same year, I was called to serve as student pastor at the Williamstown, Ohio, Brethren Church, where I continue to serve. DeAnn is very active with me, and I like to refer to my call as a joint effort of the two of us. In May of 1995, after graduation, we will move to Williamstown to begin serving as their regular pastoral couple.

If you feel God is calling you into His full-time service, don't ever give the excuse that it is too late. At one time I thought I did not have enough time left to serve the Lord in a capacity such as this. Now I regret that I waited so long to say "Yes." The joy of serving Jesus provides a feeling of incomparable contentment.

A Sunday school teacher once asked a class of students to write on a piece of paper the name of the Bible character to which they could best relate. I wrote the name of Jonah, because I felt I had shown disregard for God's plan for my life. I'm certainly glad there were no big fish around!

God is looking for people who are willing to be available for His service. Do you feel as though God has something more for you? Think about it! [✝]

*Ashland Theological Seminary*

# Seminary and Church: Joining Education with Ministry

THERE is an age-old problem that exists between many seminaries and the church bodies they serve. The churches feel that the seminaries spend too much time on the "academic" and not enough time on the practical. The seminaries, on the other hand, feel that the churches don't appreciate what they do. The basic problem is a lack of communication; neither wants to accept the responsibility.

Ashland Theological Seminary wants to change this situation. It views itself as a seminary that serves the church. It sees its responsibility as adequately equipping Christian leaders for the church. It holds to high standards for both academics and practical training. It believes that the church is essential to the work of God. There is no other agency to which God has given the task of preaching the gospel. The seminary is a servant of the church and as such seeks to serve the church.

**Serving the church:** The Mission Statement lists three primary purposes for which the seminary exists:

*Ashland Theological Seminary exists to equip committed Christians for leadership ministries of the pastorate, missions, education, counseling and community life.*

*Ashland Theological Seminary seeks to serve men and women who are preparing to minister in a variety of global contexts.*

*Ashland Theological Seminary intends its graduates to be servant-leaders in the ministries to which they are called in the church and in the world.*

Ashland Seminary has worked with the leadership of The Brethren Church as well as with denominational leaders of other churches in order to ascertain ways in which the seminary can improve its service orientation to the church and better prepare ministers for serving the church. New courses have been designed and added to the curriculum. Also, students are challenged in "Field Work" to get a good experience of life within the church. Cooperation between the church and the seminary will continue to lead to a better-prepared ministry.

**Becoming spiritually formed:** Being called by God to full-time Christian service requires years of training as well as a disciplined Christian life. Fruits of the Spirit don't immediately spring from young vines. Sometimes it takes years for the plant (person) to mature to the point of fruit-bearing.

At Ashland Seminary, we take seriously the lives that have been entrusted to us for training and equipping. Spiritual Formation is at the heart of our education. Students are encouraged to become involved in the faith community that exists on campus. This includes weekly chapels as well as spiritual formation groups (groups of 10–12 students and a faculty member) which emphasize discipline to personal devotion and prayer.

Students are also encouraged to take classes on Spiritual Formation to learn from the spiritual leaders of the past and the present, including Augustine, Thomas Kelly, Francis of Assisi, Evelyn Underhill, Mother Theresa, and Brother Andrew. Students learn the value of a "heart for God," and they also learn to walk in a life of righteousness.

**Committed to quality in education:** A student committed to the word of God must know how to accurately handle that word in preaching, teaching, and applica-

*(continued on next page)*

# Four Deacon Couples Ordained December 4th At Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland

**Ashland, Ohio** — Four deacon couples —Larry and Gloria Carman, Bruce and Sue Ellen Ronk, David and Cathy Spreng, and Paul and Debra Ritchey— were ordained Sunday evening, December 4, at the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church.

Dr. Donald Rinehart, professor of religion and chairman of the religion department at Ashland University presented the message for the service. Dr. Rinehart represented the Ohio District Board of Oversight. Scripture was read by Ronald Bowers, chair of the Deacon Ministry. Special music for the service was presented by the church choir.

Park Street's senior pastor Dr. Arden Gilmer led the ordination proceedings, assisted by associate pastor Rev. Randy Saultz and Dr. Rinehart. Prayer for the Carmans was offered by Pastor Gilmer; for the Ronks by Dorman Ronk (Bruce's father); for the Sprengs by O.B. Harding (Cathy's father); and for the Ritcheys by Ronald W. Waters (Deb's "boss").

Larry Carman is a machine operator at The Timken Company in Ashland, and Gloria is office manger for Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates. They are the parents of three married daughters, Jodi White and Kimberly Young (both of whom are members at Park Street) and Cheryl Deese (who lives in Dallas, Ga., where she is a member of a Baptist church). Both Gloria and Larry are active in the Christian Heirs Sunday school class. Gloria is also recording secretary for the church's board of administration, and Larry has served as an usher.

Bruce Ronk is a partner in Infopro, a computer sales and service store in Ashland, and Sue Ellen is head reference librarian at the Ashland University library. They have three sons, Brian in the ninth grade and twins Benjamin and David in the eighth grade. Both Sue and Bruce sing in the choir and in the musical ensemble Reveille. Bruce is assistant treasurer for the church, and Sue Ellen has taught Sunday school.

David Spreng is a computer consultant for Armco Steel in Mansfield, Ohio, and Cathy is a laboratory technologist at Mansfield General Hospital. They have a daughter, April, in the second grade. Both are active in the Salt Sunday school class, and Cathy is a member of W.M.S.

Paul Ritchey is store manager of Radio Shack in Ashland, and Debra is Administrative Assistant for Education/Leadership/Youth at the Brethren Church National Office. They are active in the Discovery Sunday school class, and Paul serves as video technician for television broadcasts of the Sunday worship services at Park Street. Deb has worked with the youth of the Brethren denomination for a number of years, first with the Board of Christian Education and now with the National Office.

An interesting sidelight on these new deacons and deaconesses is that four of the eight who were ordained are the sons or daughters of deacon couples. Bruce is the son of Park Street deacon couple Dorman and Joan Ronk. Sue Ellen Ronk is the daughter of Tom and Donna Stoffer, formerly deacon and deaconess in the Canton Trinity Brethren Church and now in the Ashland Garber Brethren Church. Cathy Spreng is the daughter of Park Street deacon couple O.B. and Lucille Harding. And Debra Ritchey is the daughter of Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church deacon couple Robert and Sue Michael. In addition, Paul Ritchey is the son of a Brethren pastoral couple, Rev. Ronald and Adele Ritchey, who serve the Cumberland, Md., First Brethren Church.



*New deacon couples at Park Street—(l. to r.) Bruce and Sue Ellen Ronk, Cathy and David Spreng, Debra and Paul Ritchey, Gloria and Larry Carman—with Pastor Arden Gilmer (r.)*

## Seminary and Church

*(continued from previous page)*

tion to daily living. No one wants to be operated on by a brain surgeon who received his or her degree by taking shortcuts. Likewise, a highly-trained ministry was always the aim of the Progressive Brethren, even when insisting on such training threatened to bring about division in the church.

Ashland Seminary is committed to excellence in education. Highly-trained professors teach students how to preach from the word of God, using training in Greek and Hebrew. A firm foundation in the study of the Old and New Testaments, theology, and church history helps equip future leaders. Yet, as an ATS faculty member remarked to a group of new students: "It doesn't matter whether you get an A or a B in this course. What matters most is that you learn that God loves you and you love God. That is the most important thing you will learn here at Ashland." [✝]

## Don Argue Named President of National Assn. of Evangelicals

**Wheaton, Ill.** — Don Argue has been named the new president (an office formerly termed executive director) of the National Association of Evangelicals.

On April 1, Argue will assume the position held for the past 28 years by retiring executive director Billy A. Melvin. Melvin officially steps down on March 31, 1995, and plans to continue other ministry options.

Argue, 55, has served as president of North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, Minn., since 1979. Under his leadership, the college grew from an enrollment of 401 to more than 1,500. In prior years he served as dean of students and campus pastor at Evangel College in Springfield, Mo., and before that he was pastor of First Assembly of God, Morgan Hill, Calif. In 1992–93, he was president (an office which will now be called chairman of the board) of NAE.

The Brethren Church is a denominational member of NAE, and some Brethren congregations and individuals are also members of the association.

# General Conf. Executive Council Approves Budget, Cares for Other Business at December 2nd Meeting

**Ashland, Ohio** — The General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) held its regular meeting on Friday, December 2, 1994. Following are highlights of the meeting:

• Approved a $10,000 gift from the 1994 operating fund to the World Relief Corporation's 50th Anniversary Disaster Response Fund. The fund, targeted for $1.3 million, will serve as a reserve which WRC can use to respond immediately to emergency disasters. The fund will then be replenished from contributions received after the response to each disaster has been publicized.

• Approved a 1995 working budget. As announced at General Conference, the working budget was not adjusted downward to reflect the anticipated shortfall in Fair Share Support from churches. GCEC reiterated its desire to move forward in planned ministries and to supplement the shortfall from reserves. The working budget projects a $69,100 deficit for 1995.

• Recognized that, due to financial problems in recent years, GCEC had allowed executive salaries to fall significantly behind those recommended for pastors. GCEC granted salary adjustments for executives for 1995 as a first step in rectifying this situation. In addition, the Moderator-Track was assigned responsibility for presenting a plan to the March GCEC meeting to bring salary levels up to scale.

• Was informed that the first payment from the sale of the Brethren's Home of Indiana had been received. Payments will extend over a 15-year period. GCEC adopted a proposal to place these receipts in the endowment fund rather than apply them to the general operating fund; to give a tithe of all receipts to the Missionary Board; and to appoint a committee to recommend how the funds should be used. It is expected that annual receipts from the sale will total about $140,000.

• Received and discussed reports from the Moderator-Track, directors of Pastoral Ministries and Brethren Church Ministries, treasurer, the Missionary Board, Ashland Theological Seminary, Special Committee on Cooperative Ministry, 1997 General Conference Location Committee, and EVANGELIST Advisory Committee.

• Gave its support to a recommendation from the Special Committee on Cooperative Ministry that the committee be disbanded and that the denominational executives be given responsibility for maintaining contacts with other denominations. Reasons for this recommendation include: contact with like-minded denominations by a committee is difficult in that such committees tend to move beyond where the rest of the denomination is; unless denominational executives are represented on the committee, talk about cooperation between denominations has little substance; and denominational executives already have contacts with their counterparts in other denominations and are most able to identify areas of cooperation. The committee will bring a recommendation for its dissolution to the 1995 General Conference.

• Appointed David Cooksey to again represent The Brethren Church on the National Association of Evangelicals board of administration; appointed NAE commissions representatives.

*— reported by Ronald W. Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries*



***Mulvane, Kans.*** *— Sunday, November 6, was "Service Station Sunday" at the Mulvane Brethren Church. The purpose of this special Sunday was to make sure that the cars of the Mulvane Brethren were ready for winter. After a fellowship dinner, which followed the morning worship service, some of the men in the church checked fluid levels and belts of the cars of the Brethren and also put air into the tires as necessary. Service Station Sunday was the idea of Johnathan Hunter, seen here (r.) with Merle McKee checking over one of the cars.*

## NAE Convention to be Held March 5–7 in Louisville, Ky.

**Wheaton, Ill.** — "One Faith, One Witness, One Hope," based on 1 Corinthians 12:13a—"For we were all baptized by One Spirit into one body"—will be the theme of the 53rd Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), to be held March 5–7 in Louisville, Ky.

The principal speakers for the conference will be: **Duane Litfin**, president of Wheaton (Ill.) College; **Morris Chapman**, current president of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and former pastor (for 13 years) of the 7,700 member First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Tex.; **Paul Conn**, president of Lee College, Cleveland, Tenn., and author or co-author of 20 books; **Jack Hayford**, pastor of The Church On The Way, Van Nuys, Calif., and author of 20 books; and **Ronald Potter**, assistant professor of Christian Thought and Contemporary Culture at the Center for Urban Theological Studies, Philadelphia, Pa.

In addition to the above speakers, 14 well-known evangelicals will speak at the various luncheons scheduled during the convention. The convention will conclude with the annual banquet, which this year will feature a tribute to Dr. Billy A. Melvin, who is retiring after 28 years as executive director of NAE.

For additional information or a registration form, contact NAE, P.O. Box 28, Wheaton, IL 60189 (phone 708-665-0500; fax 708-665-8575).

# Little Crusader

**Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).**

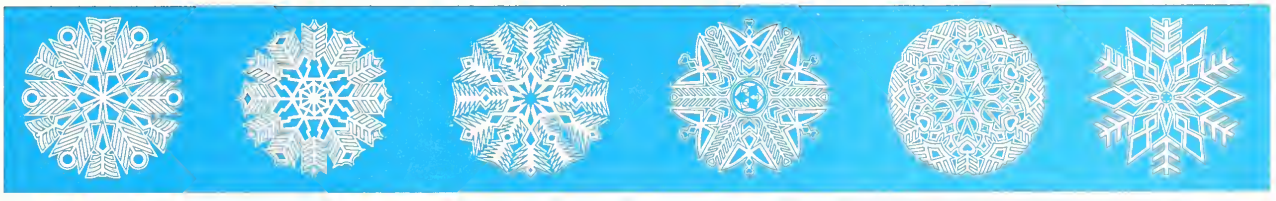
## Dear Boys and Girls,

Our bodies are very important to us. If we don't take care of them, we can become sick. It is not fun being sick.

Jesus healed many sick people. Once there was a man who was paralyzed. This means that he could not walk or move his legs. The paralyzed man had four very good friends. The friends heard that Jesus was in town, in a house nearby. They knew that Jesus could heal their friend. So they picked up the man, bed mat and all, and carried him to the house where Jesus was.

But when they got to the house, so many people were there that they couldn't even get near the doorway. So they had an idea. The friends carried the sick man up the stairway on the outside of the house to the flat roof. There they made a hole in the roof and slowly lowered their sick friend down through the opening.

What do you think Jesus and the people thought when they saw a man coming down from the ceiling? Jesus was happy that the sick man's friends had so much faith. He told the paralyzed man to "get up, take your mat and go home." The man stood up right way! Everyone was excited! They praised Jesus for His wonderful healing power!



**Number the following sentences in the correct order.**

_____ His friends lowered the paralyzed man through the roof.

_____ Jesus was talking to a room full of people.

_____ Jesus made the paralyzed man well.

_____ The house was too full of people for the friends to enter.



**Answer these questions by circling the correct answer.**

1. Did Jesus give the man medicine to make him well?
   yes no

2. Did Jesus tell the man he would be better soon?
   yes no

3. Did Jesus use God's power to make the man well?
   yes no

## From The Grape Vine

**Geneva Altfather** and **Ida Kimmel**, both members of the Berlin, Pa., Brethren Church, were honored by the Pennsylvania State Sunday School Association for their more than 50 years of service to the Berlin Brethren Sunday School. Geneva Altfather was recognized for 62 years of service, during which she served as a teacher, department superintendent, librarian, and chair of the home department. Ida Kimmel was recognized for 56 years of service, during which she served as a teacher and department superintendent. Each lady received a plaque in commemoration of this honor.

**Scott Landis**, Sunday school superintendent for the Berlin, Pa., Brethren Church, was recently chosen to serve on the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania State Sunday School Association. This association was begun in 1862 to serve the teachers and leaders of Pennsylvania's Sunday schools. According to Landis, Brethren Sunday schools in Pennsylvania can receive a free newsletter from the association by contacting the Pennsylvania State Sunday School Association, 5915 Fox Street, Harrisburg, PA 17112.


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**October 9–20, 1995**

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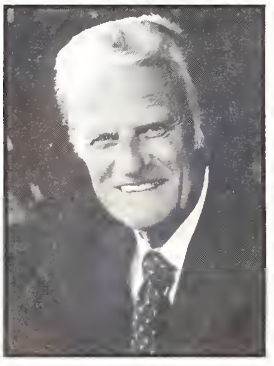
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## Evangelist Billy Graham To Hold Global Mission

**Minneapolis, Minn.** — Evangelist Billy Graham will hold a Global Mission March 16–18 that many are saying will be the largest evangelistic outreach in the history of the church and also one of the most complex technical worldwide efforts ever attempted.



Originating from the Billy Graham crusade in San Juan, Puerto Rico, this mission will be sent direct by satellite to thousands of locations in more than 165 countries. Each of these sites will be set up as if Billy Graham were personally coming to that community for a crusade.

From capital city cathedrals to outdoor jungle amphitheaters, national Christians will receive a satellite broadcast tailored to their own specifications. Before March they will choose one of the more than 40 languages available to them and will select one of eight pre-produced, culturally specific editions.

To coordinate this massive program, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) staff has trained more than 5,000 regional and national mission directors during the past year, who will in turn be training between one and one-and-a-half million Christians. From this group will come 450,000 Global Mission counselors who will do the follow-up work that is a characteristic of any Billy Graham crusade.

"We have never had anything quite like this, when we are able to reach so many millions of people every night," said Billy Graham. "The technology revolution has shrunk the world to a global village, with instant access to world news networks in even the most remote areas," Graham continued. "It is time for the church to utilize this technology to make a worldwide statement that in the midst of chaos, emptiness, and despair, there is hope in the person of Jesus Christ."

According to John R. Corts, president of BGEA, "Global Mission is a practical expression of the BGEA goal —established more than 40 years ago —to preach the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. We believe in using every modern means of communication available to us to accomplish this task."

### In Memory

**Clifford H. Robinson**, 75, December 24. Member for 25 years of the Elkhart First Brethren Church, where he had served as usher, financial secretary, vice moderator, and choir member, and was a member of the laymen's organization. Services by Pastor Timothy P. Garner.

**Mrs. P. G. (Mae) Wenger**, 94, December 16. Member for 84 years of the Bethlehem Brethren Church, where she played the organ for 82 years, taught Sunday school for many years, and served in various positions in the local and district W.M.S. organization. She was also a member of the WCTU for more than 60 years. Services by Pastor Pat Velanzon, assisted by Rev. James Logan, nephew of the deceased.

**James Jacob Pyles**, 79, December 9. Attended the Oak Hill First Brethren Church for approximately four years. Services by Pastor William Skeldon.

**Ruth K. Riley**, 91, December 7. Member and deaconess for many years of The Brethren Church at New Lebanon, where she served as a Sunday school teacher for 36 years and was a member of the W.M.S. Services by Pastor James F. Black.

**Frances Johnson**, 69, November 17. Member for approximately 20 years of the Cheyenne Brethren Church, where she taught Sunday school for many years and was a member of W.M.S., the adult prayer and Bible study group, and the Loving Hands Sewing Group. Services by Pastor G. Emery Hurd.

**Clarice M. Fitzwater**, 88, September 18. Longtime member of the Mathias Brethren Church, where she taught young people in Sunday school for many years and later became teacher of the Adult Bible Class. She and her husband George also faithfully used the spiritual gift of hospitality, hosting many visiting evangelists and Brethren missionaries. Memorial service conducted by Dr. Harold Barnett and Rev. John Mills.

### Goldenaires

**Cale and Nora Gilbert**, 60th, January 31. Members of the Dayton Hillcrest Brethren Church.

### Weddings

**Kristin L. Smith** to **Michael L. Galbraith**, December 17, at the Oakville First Brethren Church; Pastor Dan Lawson presiding. Bride a member of the Muncie First Brethren Church.

**Carla Erbsen** to **Jon Mickey**, December 17, at the Lanark First Brethren Church; Pastor Jim Garrett presiding. Bride a member of the Lanark First Brethren Church.

### Membership Growth

**Corinth:** 5 by baptism

**Oak Hill:** 4 by baptism, 3 by transfer

**St. Luke:** 5 by baptism, 5 by transfer

# World Relief Sends Expression of Appreciation To Brethren for Contribution to Rwanda Relief

*In November, The Brethren Church National Office received from World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals a framed, full-color picture of a Rwandan mother and her child (see photo at right). The picture was an expression of thanks from World Relief Corporation (WRC) for the more than $10,000 The Brethren Church sent to assist with WRC's relief work in Rwanda. These were the funds donated by Brethren congregations and individuals in response to the emergency appeal for Rwanda relief that was made last July and August.*

*Received with this picture was the following letter:*



*The writing beneath the picture says:*

***Brethren Church Ashland***

*If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire for the afflicted, then your light will shine out from the darkness and the darkness around you shall be as bright as day. And you will be like a well-watered garden, like an overflowing spring.—Isaiah 58:10–12*

***Thank You***

*[Signed:] Art Gay, President; Bas Vanderzalm, Vice President/International Ministries; David Loudon, Disaster Response Director*

***World Relief***

Dear [Brethren],

On behalf of our brothers and sisters and those they faithfully serve in Rwanda, thank you so much for your generous gift to World Relief's emergency response in that country.

*Atlantic Monthly* carried a compelling article earlier this year entitled, "The Coming Anarchy." Here is a quote that easily describes Rwanda (as well as other African and Third World countries): "The withering away of central governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, the unchecked spread of disease, and the growing pervasiveness of war."

Your compassionate response has helped make a difference in Rwanda. You know of the horror, the bloodshed, the continuing atrocities. You gave because you felt compelled to respond in Christ's name. And, through the local church, World Relief has been doing just that from April until the present time.

The accompanying report provides you with an easy-to-read, chronological record of our relief response. All of this has been done in close partnership with the local churches and denominations, which you also see named. There has been much value for your dollar, because missions donated facilities, such as a hospital, and seconded medical staff to serve as emergency workers, churches were pressed into use as warehouses, and missionaries used their language skills to facilitate communication.

In a statement released October 20, David Loudon, World Relief's Disaster Response Director, states: "Many people think the crisis in Rwanda is either over or impossible to deal with . . . It's neither. There's much relief work yet to be done, but we are actively planning the next stages of rehabilitation and reconstruction." Funds are still urgently needed!

*"I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me . . . sick and you took care of me. . . . I tell you, whenever you did this . . . you did it for me."* *Matthew 25:40*

Thank you for giving — in Christ's name.

Sincerely,

Arthur Evans Gay
President

## Brethren Church Donates $10,000 to World Relief's Disaster Response Fund

The General Conference Executive Council at its December 2nd meeting approved a $10,000 gift to World Relief Corporation for WRC's 50th Anniversary Disaster Response Fund.

This gift, which was taken from the 1994 operating fund, was in addition to the more than $10,000 in funds that were received from Brethren churches and individuals earlier this year and sent to WRC for its relief work in Rwanda (*see article at left*).

World Relief's 50th Anniversary Disaster Response Fund, targeted for $1.3 million, will be a special reserve fund that WRC can use to respond to disasters as soon as they occur. The fund will then be replenished from contributions received after the response to each disaster has been publicized.

A letter of thanks from WRC President Arthur Gay sent to Rev. Ronald Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, said in part:

*In the light of the challenges you have ahead of you, thank you for the remarkable gift of $10,000 to our 50th Anniversary Disaster Response Fund. May God honor your trust and faith. I know He will! He has always blessed you people because you have the priorities straight. May God's blessing rest upon you all. You are a pacesetter for the other denominations. It will be great to tell them what you and others are doing.*

In that same letter Dr. Gay also said that he had just returned from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where World Relief is running the Cuban and Haitian refugee camps, which he called "a huge challenge but also a great opportunity." He noted: "In the last two months, over 1,000 Cubans have been baptized! What a good God we serve."

## World Relief Prayer Alert

A fax from World Relief Corporation received December 19 at The Brethren Church National Office told of new violence in the West African nation of Liberia, where World Relief has been at work seeking to bring about reconciliation. Prayer was requested for:

- Safety for World Relief staff in Liberia.
- Peace for Liberia after five years of war, in which 90 percent of the casualties have been women and children.
- God's blessing on the next steps of reconciliation to which the church, once divided, has committed itself.

# Seven Blessings for the New Year

## *May the Lord's presence this year:*

**Be above you**—to guard you.
*Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the* LORD *is God in heaven above . . . .* Deuteronomy 4:39

**Be underneath you**—to support you.
*The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.* Deuteronomy 33:27

**Be behind you**—as a rear guard.
*. . . the God of Israel will be your rear guard.* Isaiah 52:12

**Be at your right hand**—to protect you.
*Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.* Psalm 16:8

**Go before you**—to lead you.
*I will go before you and will level the mountains.* Isaiah 45:2

**Surround you**—to shield you from storms.
*As the mountains surround Jerusalem,*
*so the* LORD *surrounds his people*
*both now and forevermore.* Psalm 125:2

**Be within you**—as Counselor and Comforter.
*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. . . and [he] will be in you.* John 14:16–17

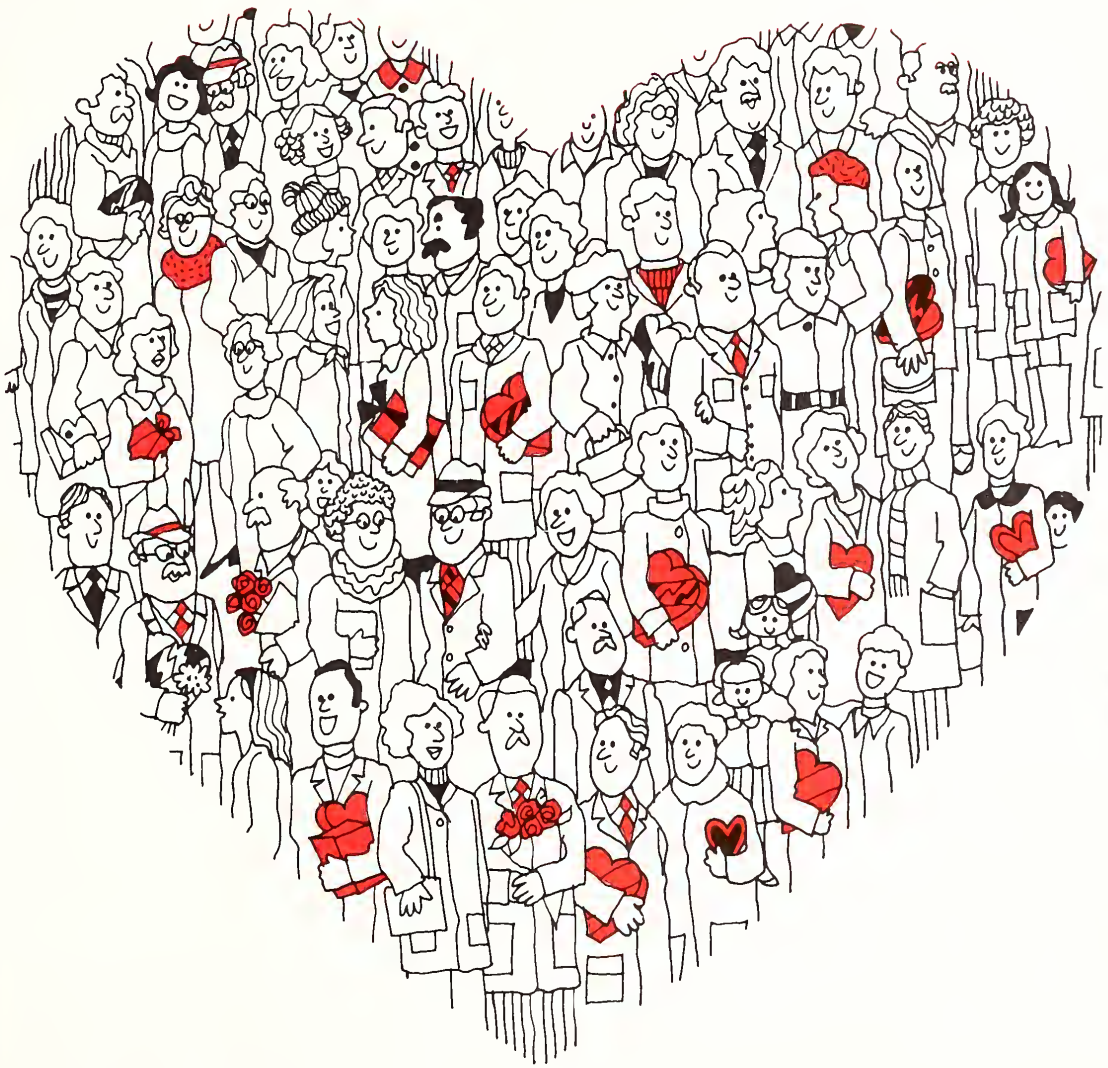
Adapted from a blessing by Mrs. Jonathan Goforth printed in *The Sunday School Times* and quoted in ***Speaker's Sourcebook II*** compiled by Eleanor Doan (Zondervan Publishing House, 1988).

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THE BRETHREN
# Evangelist
FEBRUARY 1995

## Blest be the Tie that Binds



## Our Hearts in Christian Love.

*See pages 3, 4, and 5.*

# Thoughts on School Prayer

By Richard C. Winfield, Editor

THE SCHOOL PRAYER issue, like most matters of importance, is not a simple, one-sided issue. I was convinced of that as I put together this month's EVANGELIST.

On pages 10–12 of this magazine are a working document for a proposed "Student Prayer Amendment to the Constitution of the United States" and a "Rationale" explaining the background, meaning, and purpose of that proposed amendment. I hadn't any more than put those pages together then I received a magazine from another denomination that contained an article on "Why a constitutional amendment for public school prayer is a BAD IDEA." I immediately read it!

## Another point of view

The author, Ronald B. Flowers, chair of the religion department at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, contends that an amendment to provide for voluntary prayer in the public schools is a bad idea for five reasons: (1) it is unnecessary; (2) it is inconsistent with conservative political philosophy; (3) it has the appearance of politics as usual; (4) it is a dangerous tinkering with a fundamental constitutional principle; and (5) it has the potential to be harmful to religious institutions.

While his arguments did not convince me, he did have some significant things to say. And his article shows that thoughtful Christian people can have different points of view on the school prayer issue.

My purpose here is not to argue for or against a school prayer amendment. Rather, I want to comment on some side issues related to this subject.

I saw another article recently that associated the 1962 Supreme Court decision on prayer in schools with a decline since that time in student achievement test scores. I did not keep the article and I don't remember the details, but the article seemed to be attributing the decline in test scores, as well as other problems in our schools, to the fact that schools no longer begin the day with prayer.

Maybe there is a cause and effect relationship. But it seems to me that other factors—the greater amount of time children spend watching television and playing video games; the proliferation of extra-school activities; the fact that more mothers work outside the home now than in 1962 resulting in less parental supervision of children after school —may also have played a part in bringing about this decline in student test scores.

In fact, our society today is a lot different from what it was in 1962, and many of these changes may have played a part in the decline in student achievement. So even if prayer were restored to our classrooms, it is questionable whether that alone would bring about an increase in test scores.

## School prayer nonsense

Furthermore, there is a lot of nonsense propagated about students and prayer. Cartoons are particularly good at this. Like the one I saw recently in which a school principal says to a little boy: "Hey, you're late for class," to which the boy mumbles something under his breath. "What did you say?" shouts the principal. "I said, 'Get off my back!'" replies the boy. To which the principal responds, "Oh, sorry, I thought you were praying!"

It is true that a few over-zealous school administrators have tried to forbid even personal prayer. Like the school principal in St. Louis who gave a boy detention for bowing his head over his lunch. But the fact is that the Supreme Court has never prohibited truly voluntary prayer. What it has declared unconstitutional are state-mandated and/or school-sponsored prayer.

## Teach them to pray

That being the case, if we want our children and grandchildren to pray in school, let us *teach* them to pray and how to do so. Let us teach them to pray to a Father in heaven who loves them; in the name of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of the Father interceding for them; and in the power of the Holy Spirit, who prays for them when they don't know what to say.

Isn't this much better than having some teacher or fellow student lead in some generic prayer to a nameless deity? Or worse yet, having them led in a sectarian prayer to some other god?

A student prayer amendment may be necessary in order to *guarantee* the right of students in public schools to pray. But if those students are not taught how to pray and to whom to pray, the effort put forth to pass such an amendment will have been made in vain. [⇧]



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**Cover:** For most people, Valentine's Day is a celebration of romantic love. But as Christians, we can celebrate a greater love, the love of God, which has been poured into our hearts. This love is a tie that binds us together (*see "Blest Be the Tie of Fellowship" on page 4*), and a grace that enables us to show hospitality to others (*see "Hospitality: Burden or Blessing?" on page 5*).

**Answers to the Little Crusader page:**

1. Your neighbor is everyone around you, particularly someone in trouble or in need. 2. You should love your neighbor because God commands us to do so. 3. We hope that your answer to this question is Yes!

There are many possible answers to the questions in the hearts. You show that you love yourself by feeding yourself, taking care of yourself, getting things you want, etc. You can show that you love your neighbors by being kind to them, helping them, telling them about Jesus, praying for them, and in many other ways.



# Blest Be the Tie of Fellowship

By Dennis E. Sigle

The second of four articles on Acts 2:42, the General Conference theme verse for 1995.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* Acts 2:42[1]

JOHN FAWCETT was preparing to move. At age 32, he was leaving the small Baptist church in Wainsgate, England, for the prestigious Carter's Lane church in London.

Fawcett had worked hard. Orphaned at 12, he was forced to work fourteen hours a day in a sweat shop. He taught himself to read by candlelight and studied continuously. When he was ordained at age 25, he moved to Wainsgate. For seven years he served the tiny church of 100 members before receiving the invitation in London.

However, Fawcett never moved to London. He couldn't break "the tie that binds." The last possessions were loaded on the moving cart as Fawcett began his goodbyes. Tearfully he bade farewell to those he had loved for the past seven years. They returned his tears . . . and his love. It was too much for the young preacher. London would have to wait. Unloading the cart, he decided to stay in Wainsgate a little longer. Fawcett never moved to London; he never even left Wainsgate. He died there 54 years later.

Fawcett was destined to become one of England's greatest preachers. He wrote hymns, published books and opened a training school for young ministers. His "Essay on Anger" so impressed King George III that he offered Fawcett "any benefit a king could confer."

His love for the people and their love for him not only kept him in Wainsgate, but it also prompted the writing of a hymn we sing even today:

*Blest be the tie that binds*
*Our hearts in Christian love;*
*The fellowship of kindred minds*
*Is like to that above.*[2]

What is the meaning of "They devoted themselves . . . to the fellowship" in Acts 2:42? John Fawcett viewed it as "the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." How adequately that description carries us into Acts 2:42, where we view the more than 3,000 souls forming the first church!

## Four building blocks

That church was constructed on four major building blocks: the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. The new church of the Acts of the Apostles *devoted* itself to these four power-blocks.

To be devoted involves the blessing of that *tie that binds.* Devotedness binds us together with one another in love. *It binds* ***us*** *together.* Matthew Henry, a scholar of yesterday, wrote this about the new church's devotedness:

> They kept up the *communion of saints.* They continued *in fellowship* (v. 42, KJV), *and continued daily with one accord in the temple,* (v. 46, KJV). They not only had a mutual affection to each other, but a great deal of mutual conversation with each other; they were much together.
>
> . . . very intimate with one another, and took all occasions to meet; wherever you saw one disciple, you would see more like *birds of a feather.* See how these Christians love one another. They were concerned for one another, sympathized with one another, and heartily espoused one another's interests. They had fellowship with one another in religious worship. They met in the Temple: there was their rendezvous; for joint fellowship with God is the best fellowship we can have with one another, 1 John 1:3.
>
> . . . Though they met with the Jews in the courts of the Temple, yet the Christians kept together by themselves, and were unanimous in their separate devotions.[3]

Upon reflection, it is little wonder that Moderator Reilly Smith shared with us so powerfully on the last day of the 1994 General Conference that "We have lost the meaning of *devoted.*" The early founders of our denomination loved one another so much that they called one another *brethren,* a title denoting love and devotion to one another.

What do we call one another to-

[1]Quotations from the Bible, unless otherwise noted, are from the *New International Version.*

*Rev. Sigle is pastor of the Burlington, Indiana, First Brethren Church.*

[2]Quoted from an illustration by Norm Petersen.

[3]Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible,* Acts to Revelation, Vol. 6 (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co.) p. 28.

day? We call one another to say that our family is having a "Family Day" and that we cannot possibly wait until after Sunday school or the worship service to go. Being absent from Sunday school, the worship serve, mid-week prayer and Bible study, the children's group, youth group, W.M.S., choir, or board meeting seldom brings a tear to our eye or a tinge of guilt to our conscience. Rather than experiencing the inward pain that the hymn *Blest Be the Tie* speaks of, it is as though being away from the fellowship relieves us of a great burden.

We Brethren also call one another unloving names, thereby quenching the work of the Holy Spirit. And then we wonder why our worship, our servanthood, and our offerings are not blessed. We talk to our children about the call of God, and yet we very seldom teach them the importance and devotedness of calling one another *brethren.*

Just as we have been ***Called to Declare*** by 1 Peter 2:9, I declare to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, that we must return to being devoted to one another in fellowship. Most Brethren affirm that the day is short and that Christ's return will be soon. Why, then, do we deny one another fellowship by being unforgiving, by complaining, by being angry with one another—behavior that shocks even the unsaved as they observe the Brethren?

Is Christ coming again or not? Is Christ making you a new creature in Himself or not? Are we committed to building up the body of Christ or to tearing down the body of Christ?

### Three grand essentials

Allan K. Chalmers said, "The grand essentials of happiness are: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for."

Brethren, I believe that one of the essentials for happy fellowship is ***something to do.*** Gather for worship, for prayer, for youth meetings, for W.M.S., for home studies, for how-to sessions, for meals, etc. Fellowship provides Brethren an opportunity to draw away from this hectic word and to be with one another. *Let's do it!*

And as you gather together, know that you have ***something to love.*** Love God. Love one another. I mean let us truly, genuinely, sincerely *love* one another. ***Be*** as loving to one another as you *appear* to be. Do it that the world might know—without a doubt—that we are Jesus' disciples.

And, Brethren, as you gather, know that you have ***something to hope for.*** We have the hope that through our fellowship and our devotion to one another, we can create a bit of heaven here on earth. We have the hope that through our fellowship and devotion to one another, others can sense the joy and beauty of receiving Christ as their Savior, too. We have the hope that they, too, will become devoted as Brethren to a happy fellowship.

> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. *1 John 1:3*

My fellow Brethren, the time has come not only to sing these words, but also to live them:

> *Blest be the tie that binds*
> *Our hearts in Christian love;*
> *The fellowship of kindred minds*
> *Is like to that above.* [⇧]

# Hospitality: Burden or Blessing?

By Clem J. Walters

HOSPITALITY can be learned. A good place to start is to observe what others do to make you feel welcome. Could you extend the same love and courtesy to your own guests?

If you don't know how to do something, ask. How does the mother of a large family prepare enough food for all of them? How does she keep food hot? What can you offer a vegetarian guest? How can small children be included in dinner conversation without having them dominate it? It is helpful for you to talk with other Christians about their successes and failures in practicing hospitality. What worked? What didn't? What can be improved? What are you learning?

The most important way to grow in hospitality is through practice. No amount of theorizing can substitute for inviting a guest over for dinner. Talk with those in your family or living situation about setting aside time on some regular basis for hospitality. Sit down with them and make a list of people you would like to welcome into your home.

This will include family members and friends, but what about neighbors, members of your church organization, coworkers, children's friends, those who are disadvantaged in some way? How about people from the local nursing home or foreign students at the local college? Then there are those who can be evangelized by the love of a Christian family. Talk together about what you need to do in order to prepare for a visit in each of these different circumstances.

It is also important to talk with other Christians about the way you welcome newcomers to your services or meetings. Do strangers feel loved and cared for? Do they know how to participate and what is expected of them? Are they introduced to others and shown where to find the coat rack, the restrooms, a place to sit? Most important, is someone interested in them and why they are there? Everyone in the group should examine his or her actions and attitudes toward guests. Perhaps it would also be helpful to designate greeters, whose chief concern is making guests feel welcome in the group.

Besides deliberately practicing hospitality, you will grow as a Christian servant if you respond graciously to unplanned hospitality. When the telephone or doorbell rings, you can either be annoyed at the intrusion or you can welcome Christ in the person on the other side of the bell. It is also good to be honest with others about your limitations: "I'm sorry, I can't talk with you right now; can I call you back in half an hour?" or "Would you mind waiting while I get the children started on their homework? Then I can sit down with you."

Hospitality can be either spontaneous or planned, but it is a litmus test for servanthood. If you avoid the practice of hospitality, you have not yet learned to be a Christian servant. [⇧]

*Excerpted from* To Serve As Jesus Served *by Clem J. Walters (Greenlawn Press, 107 S. Greenlawn, South Bend, IN 46617; $5.95). Used by permission.*

# Testing Our Knowledge Of Brethren Leaders after 1883

By Matthew W. Hamel

A quizzical look at those who led our church following the 1882 division and the formation of The Brethren Church in 1883. These leaders, convinced that the gospel must be related to the culture of the day, were visionaries whose insights continue to impact us today.

1. Many of the leaders of the new Brethren denomination after its formation in 1883 were Progressives by conviction who were disfellowshiped from the main body of Brethren because of their "radical" ideas. J. B. Early (1867– ?) was one such Brethren leader. A native of Ohio, he disagreed with the mandatory nature of Annual Meeting decisions. After relocating to Oregon, he began a pioneering ministry to the deaf.

True. Go to 4.

False. Go to 23.

2. Yes! Jacob C. Cassel is called "the father of Brethren foreign missions" because of his support of the missions cause. He served as treasurer of the Foreign Missionary Society from its inception in 1900 until 1918. He also served on the Publication Board and the Board of Trustees of Ashland College. Continue on to 28.



*Elder Jacob C. Cassel*

3. No, Mary Bauman did not found the Sister's Society of Christian Endeavor (which later became the Woman's Missionary Society), although she was undoubtedly active in this organization, since she was a contemporary of Mary Malinda Sterling (1859–1933), the first president of the S.S.C.E. Backtrack to 13 and try again.

*Mr. Hamel, a member of the Johnstown, Pa., Second Brethren Church, currently lives in Ashland, Ohio, and attends the new Brethren Church of Medina.*

4. Right; good start! During the four years he worked at the Oregon School for the Deaf in Salem, Oreg., Elder J. B. Early became proficient in sign language and was able to preach in sign language as well as interpret the sermons of others for the students. Go to 12.

5. The Brethren Church was blessed with an unusual number of capable leaders. One such leader was Stephen Bashor, an excellent evangelist who was instrumental in founding a number of Progressive Brethren congregations. Another early Brethren church planter was:

D. C. Moomaw. Go to 24.

Joseph W. Beer. Go to 9.

6. Afraid not! *This* Yoder (Eli Lorenzo) was involved in work of another kind. He joined the Brethren in 1866 and led the growing Sunday School movement, organizing state conventions. He was one of the leaders of the Dayton convention of 1883, at which The Brethren Church was organized. He also served for a time as managing editor of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST. Hop to 23.

7. Right on! Daniel Miller served as a township trustee, and in an article in the *Progressive Brethren*, he criticized the Annual Meeting ruling that prohibited Brethren from serving in the legislature. Proceed to 26.

8. Correct! (Did you have any doubts?) When J. Allen Miller became head of the Bible department, it became known for the first time as a "seminary." Miller served as an instructor and dean at the seminary for 27 years, until his death in 1933. His wife, Clara Worst Miller (1876–1970), taught Latin and Greek at the college, retiring in 1958 after 54 years of service! Continue on to 30.

9. Correct! In addition to beginning congregations across the United States, Joseph W. Beer served as moderator of the Ashland Convention (in 1882), wrote two books on Brethren topics, and edited a Brethren hymnal. He also served as Henry Holsinger's secretary in the writing of Holsinger's *History of the Tunkers and The Brethren Church.* Swing by 24, then on to 13.



*Elder Joseph W. Beer*

10. Right (and your mind isn't so bad either!). Claud Studebaker not only memorized the names of his parishioners, he knew their birthdays, anniversaries, addresses, and phone numbers. He also memorized all of the New Testament and much of the Old Testament. He was also a gifted, caring leader. On to 18.

11. Good choice! In 1894, Samuel Duncan, the son of a German Baptist elder, returned to Oak Hill from Bridgewater College wearing new glasses with gold frames. The presiding elders of his congregation expelled the young student for wearing the gold frames, resulting in the formation of the Oak Hill Progressive Brethren Church by Samuel's father, Elder Arthur B. Duncan. Freeman Ankrum, Breth-

ren historian and one-time pastor of the Oak Hill congregation, noted that Samuel suggested the tune for the well-known hymn, "Leaning On the Everlasting Arms." The tune is credited to A. J. Showalter, who taught in the music department at Bridgewater College. Now try 5.

**12.** Daniel Miller, an acquaintance of Henry Holsinger and the organizer of the Milford, Ind., Brethren Church, served as the local newspaper correspondent for the volatile Annual Meeting of 1882. Miller was later expelled from the church for his account of that Annual Meeting, in which he detailed the tensions within the denomination. He was also heavily criticized for his involvement in:

Education. Go to 15.

Politics. Go to 7.

**13.** William J. H. Bauman (1837–1922) began many Brethren congregations in the Missouri valley and served as the only delegate from that area to the Dayton Convention of 1883. His daughter-in-law, Mary M. Wageman Bauman (1876–1909), founded the first chapter of what organization?

Sister's Society of Christian Endeavor. Go to 3.

Sisterhood of Mary and Martha. Go to 29.

**14.** No, you're behind the times. In 1883 Henry Holsinger traveled to California to preach to the scattered Brethren in the San Diego area, but one congregation had already been organized in the state a number of years earlier. See 25.

**15.** Afraid not. Try 7 instead.

**16.** Gotcha! Go back to 20 and try again.

**17.** No, James Gribble did not help form the Foreign Missionary Society (FMS), but he and his wife, Florence Newberry Gribble, did begin Brethren mission work in French Equatorial Africa in 1918, eighteen years after the formation of the FMS. See 2.

**18.** Brethren settled in California as early as the 1849 Gold Rush, but no Brethren congregation was organized in that state until:

1883. Go to 14.

1857. Go to 25.

**19.** Yes. Charles Francis Yoder (1873–1955, son of E. L. Yoder) was a scholar, missionary, and (from 1903–1907) editor of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST. Move on to 21.

**20.** Other Brethren leaders of this time helped initiate progress in education through their work with the young, financially troubled Ashland College. One such leader was J. Allen Miller, who served as president of the institution twice, from 1894 to 1896 and again from 1898 to 1906. In 1906 he stepped down as president to become:



*Dr. J. Allen Miller*

Dean of the Bible department. Go to 8.

Head football coach. Go to 16.

**21.** Claud Studebaker (1883–1961) pastored Brethren churches in Kansas, Iowa, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. The author of *A Brief Introduction to the Brethren Church*, he was known throughout the denomination for:

Manufacturing automobiles. Go to 27.

His outstanding memory. Go to 10.

**22.** No, not this congregation. The Newark congregation was begun as a Home Mission church in 1954, and initially services were held in the local YMCA. Later, services were held in the Missionary Board's portable chapel. Now the church is noteworthy for having the only round building in the denomination. Quite a spectacle! Detour to 11.

**23.** Nope, try 4 instead.

**24.** Good choice! D. C. Moomaw was a minister in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia who was devoted to the Progressive cause. Like Bashor, he held "protracted meetings" (evangelistic services) regularly, which resulted in the organization of 11 congregations in the Blue Ridge mountains. Backtrack to 9, then go to 13.

**25.** Right on! George Wolfe led a group of Brethren to California who settled in the San Joaquin valley and who organized the Lathrop Brethren Church in 1857. Even though this church originated prior to the division of 1882, the congregation remained loyal to the Progressive cause following the division. Ease on down to 31.

**26.** After its formation in 1883, The Brethren Church soon organized denominational boards. A key figure in the formation of the Foreign Missionary Society was:

Jacob C. Cassel. Go to 2.

James S. Gribble. Go to 17.

**27.** No, Claud Studebaker did not manufacture cars, although he was related to the Studebaker family that built cars by that name in South Bend, Indiana, and whose homestead was just east of Ashland, Ohio. Claud, however, was known for other accomplishments. See 10.

**28.** A pair of gold-framed spectacles played a significant part in bringing about the formation of this congregation:

The Newark, Ohio, Brethren Church. Go to 22.

The Oak Hill, West Virginia, Brethren Church. Go to 11.

**29.** Correct. Mary Bauman began the first local Sisterhood of Mary and Martha in 1906 while she and her husband were serving the Philadelphia, Pa., First Brethren Church. Mrs. Bauman was also an ordained minister, having been ordained in 1900 by the Roann, Ind., congregation at the recommendation of the Missionary Board. She took her husband's place in the pulpit during his absences as a traveling evangelist. Head back to 20.

**30.** Like J. Allen Miller, this individual attended the University of Chicago and taught courses at Ashland Seminary. He also began Brethren mission work in Argentina in 1909, and served there many years. This person was:

E. L. Yoder. Go to 6.

C. F. Yoder. Go to 19.

**31.** Congratulations! You've finished this quiz on early leaders of The Brethren Church! [⇧]



Understanding the Bible

# Our Brethren Spiritual Inheritance

By Dale R. Stoffer

NO MOVEMENT starts in a vacuum. That is to say, every movement—whether intellectual, social, artistic, or religious—always reflects the cultural setting in which it originated. This is true even of Christianity. Jesus Christ was born into a particular culture, spoke the language of that culture, dressed and ate and worshiped as did others in that culture.

To be sure, Jesus was unique both because of who He was and because of the divine message that He proclaimed. But in both cases, His uniqueness had points of contact with His culture. Jesus came as a flesh-and-blood, 1st-century Jew, and He declared His message in a way that was understandable to 1st-century Jews. All of these truths are part of the mystery of the incarnation—Christ becoming one of us, for us and for our salvation.

The Brethren movement, which began in the 18th century, likewise reflected the historical and cultural setting of its day. Our faith finds its heritage in two movements in particular: Pietism and Anabaptism.

## Roots of Pietism

Pietism has its roots in 17th-century Europe, when the Christian faith had become very stale and rigid. Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed—the three major Christian groups—had developed a form of religious expression that emphasized correct beliefs and insisted on conformity to particular creeds and confessions. The clergy of these groups devoted much of their writing and preaching to pointing out the rightness of their own position and the errors of the other expressions of faith.

As a result, the vitality and fervor of the 16th-century Reformation had been lost. Creeds became better known than the Bible. Clergy became defenders of orthodoxy rather than pastors to their people. Contentious, cold orthodoxy stifled concern for a devotional life committed to loving God and neighbor.

## Correct doctrine is not enough

Pietism responded to this situation by insisting that correct doctrine is not enough. Christians must also seek to practice their faith rightly. It is not enough merely to be born again. Christians must also live the new life in Christ. Christians are known by love for God and love for neighbors, especially their brothers and sisters in Christ. Knowing the creeds is not enough. Christians must know and live the Bible. Clergy must be truly concerned about the spiritual vitality of their people, and laity must be encouraged to develop their own devotional lives through the reading of Scripture and other devotional works.

**Correspondence Welcomed**

The members of the General Conference Executive Council's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication invite readers to suggest topics or Bible passages to discuss in future articles in this column. Send questions, comments, or suggestions to the committee in care of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

Most of the early Brethren, prior to the beginning of the Brethren movement, were connected with a more radical form of Pietism that stressed separation from all Christian groups, rejected the necessity of such outward observances as baptism and communion, and sought a more inward and individual form of devotion to Christ. They shared, however, many of the basic convictions of the Pietists, especially that Christians are called to right living as well as to right belief.

As they studied the Bible together, the small group of people led by Alexander Mack who formed the core of the first Brethren came to the conviction that full obedience to Christ and the Scriptures called them to more than just an inward, individual devotional life. They believed that the New Testament also directed them to observe such outward or formal practices as baptism, communion, discipline, and anointing the sick with oil. The early Brethren were especially drawn to the Mennonites, whom they considered the group that most fully modeled the life and outward practices of the early Christian church.

## Basics of Anabaptism*

The Mennonites were an Anabaptist group that began during the 16th-century Reformation. They were severely persecuted by Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed alike. The Anabaptists stood opposed to many of the accepted practices of the day. They rejected infant baptism and baptized only believers.

*Anabaptism means *to baptize again*, and Anabaptists were so called because they required those who wanted to join them who had been baptized as infants *to be baptized again*.

*Dr. Stoffer is assistant professor of historical theology at Ashland Theological Seminary. He serves on The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

***"Though most of our beliefs and practices can be traced to these two movements [Pietism and Anabaptism], the uniqueness of the Brethren is found in the way that we have blended them together."***

They believed that government must not interfere in the affairs of the church, whereas other groups believed in the state-church concept, the idea that government should support and recognize only one faith—and persecute all others.

Likewise, Anabaptists held that Christians are citizens only of the kingdom of God, not of the kingdoms of this world. For this reason, they refused to swear allegiance to or take up arms for any government. In fact, they were horrified that throughout Europe Christians were killing Christians in the name of Christ because their allegiance to a government was superior to their allegiance to Christ. Above all, Anabaptists sought to follow Jesus Christ and His Word in full obedience, even if that meant being put to death for their faith—as tens of thousands were.

## Points in common

It is noteworthy that even though Pietism and Anabaptism each had its own characteristic emphases, both had a number of points in common. For example, both had a high regard for Scripture, believing that it was to be fully obeyed, not just with regard to doctrine, but especially with regard to the life that is modeled by Christ and the disciples. Both movements were optimistic about the individual's ability to live the Christlike life because of the power of the indwelling Spirit. Both movements stressed the priesthood of all believers far more than the other religious groups, for they felt that all Christians should be active participants in knowing and practicing the faith. And both movements sought to cultivate true love for God and neighbor.

The Brethren were heirs to both of these movements. Like the Anabaptists and Pietists, they applied Scripture to both doctrine and life, doing so in a mostly literal fashion. They read the Bible in order to follow Christ more closely in discipleship. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they tried to obey both the commands and the example of Christ and the apostles, in order to live in ways that demonstrated love of God and neighbor.

Though most of our beliefs and practices can be traced to these two movements, the uniqueness of the Brethren is found in the way that we have blended them together. A basic tension tends to emerge between the emphases of the Pietists and those of the Anabaptists. The Pietists generally emphasized those truths and qualities that were inward, spiritual, and individual. The Anabaptists generally stressed aspects of the faith that were outward, practical, and corporate. The Brethren sought to give recognition to both of these aspects of the faith, to hold together truths which seemed to be in conflict. To illustrate this I have developed the following chart:

| **Pietism:**<br>**Inward, spiritual emphasis** | **Anabaptism:**<br>**Outward, corporate emphasis** |
|---|---|
| The leading of the Spirit (the inner Word) | The authority of Scripture (the outer Word) |
| Inner spiritual baptism (by the Spirit) | Outward physical baptism (in water) |
| Inward faith | Outward obedience |
| Individual freedom of expression | Corporate unity and peace |
| Openness to new truth (based on the Spirit's leading) | Corporate consensus (based on Scripture) |
| Concern for an individual's spiritual growth | Concern for corporate purity through discipline |

Brethren have been at their best when they have maintained a balance between these two aspects of the faith. Vernard Eller, a Church of the Brethren writer, has offered this observation about how the emphases keep each other in check:

> The two emphases check and balance each other. When the Radical Pietist tendency would slide off into subjectivism, private inspiration, mysticism, enthusiasm, or vaporous spiritualism, it is pulled up short by the demand for concrete, outward obedience to an objective Scriptural norm. Conversely, when the Anabaptist tendency would slide off into formalism, legalism, biblical literalism, or works-righteousness, it is checked by the reminder that faith is essentially a work of God within the heart of the individual believer, an intensely personal relationship rather than a legal one. Thus, within Brethrenism, Anabaptist influences *discipline* Pietism at the same time that Pietist influences *inspire* Anabaptism.*

One of the trademarks of the Brethren has been this desire to maintain balance on issues on which Scripture itself presents two sides. This is exemplified in how the Brethren drew truths from both Anabaptism and Pietism to arrive at a balanced understanding of (1) individual and corporate interpretation of Scripture and (2) the understanding of obedience.

First, the Pietists, especially Radical Pietists, championed freedom of conscience in religious matters, refusing to be coerced into accepting the creeds and confessions of the state churches in Europe. Pietists in general also were willing to hold doctrinal views that were not in conformity with the creeds but which

*(continued on page 11)*

*Vernard Eller, "On Epitomizing the Brethren," *Brethren Life and Thought* 6 (Autumn 1961): 50–51.

# NAE Tackles the School Prayer Issue

**A working document for a proposed constitutional amendment, prepared by the Office of Public Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals.**

*In recent years increased interest has been shown in adding an amendment to the Constitution of the United States that would define and clarify the right of students in public schools to pray.*

*The need for such an amendment is indicated by the current controversy over the issue as well as the confusion about what kinds of religious expression in public schools are now considered constitutional. For example, the Supreme Court ruled in 1992 that when a Jewish rabbi offered a brief prayer at a public high-school graduation ceremony, his doing so was unconstitutional. On the other hand, prayers at graduation ceremonies are apparently constitutional if the graduates themselves initiate such a prayer, ask one of the students to offer it, and that student offers a non-sectarian prayer. Some schools, however, are reluctant to even allow such prayers at commencement ceremonies.*

*Further evidence of the confusion is indicated in that most schools have no problem with students gathering at the school flagpole before school hours to pray during the annual "See You at the Pole" observance. But school officials at a school in Corpus Christi, Texas, warned students that they would be punished if they participated in the 1993 "See You at the Pole" observance. The school officials claimed that this activity was against school district policy. And while most school officials would see no problem if a student said a private prayer before eating lunch at school, recently a student at one school was given detention for doing so.*

*One group that is seeking to clarify this issue is the Office of Public Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals. This office, located in Washington, D.C., has prepared a proposed prayer amendment as a* ***working document*** *to encourage discussion and debate of this issue. Dr. Robert P. Dugan, Jr., Director of the Office of Public Affairs, in a conversation with Editor Dick Winfield, stressed the fact that this is a* ***working document.*** *It has not been approved by the National Association of Evangelicals, nor has it been presented to Congress. Furthermore, it is only one among a number of attempts by various groups to write a proposed amendment that will define the right of students to pray in public schools. The NAE Office of Public Affairs hopes that by offering this proposal, it will contribute to a discussion of this issue that will result in a final Student Prayer Amendment proposal that will gain the widest possible support from the American people.*

*The proposed amendment and the "Rationale" behind this amendment are being printed here, with the permission of the NAE Office of Public Affairs, in order that Brethren people might be aware of the proposal and give careful thought to this subject. It is important that the "Rationale" be studied along with the proposed amendment in order to understand the meaning of this proposal, and also in order to grasp the larger ramifications of the school prayer issue.*

### Student Prayer Amendment
to the
### Constitution of the United States
a working document proposed by the
Office of Public Affairs of the
National Association of Evangelicals
December 7, 1994

Section 1. The recognition of God being necessary to secure the Creator's blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to deny or abridge the free exercise right of public school students to participate in prayer. As used in this article, "prayer" includes individual or group religious expression, as well as vocal or silent prayer, by students in public schools at any time.

Section 2. Neither the United States nor any State shall prescribe the form or content of prayer, require any student to participate in prayer, or deny or abridge the right of any student to have an equal opportunity to participate in prayer according to the dictates of conscience.

Section 3. The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

## Rationale
To Accompany a
### Student Prayer Amendment
to the
### Constitution of the United States
a working document proposed by the
Office of Public Affairs of the
National Association of Evangelicals

The proposed constitutional amendment reflects a good-faith effort by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) to remove from the field of controversy the school prayer issue which has divided the American people far too long. NAE has tried to be faithful to the Founders of this great nation, while fulfilling the hopes of the American people that this difficult and divisive issue finally be resolved.

### Introduction

NAE firmly believes in the separation of church and state, but ours is an accommodationist rather than an absolutist view. On the one hand, we do not get upset at a U.S. postage stamp of the Madonna and Child, as do some absolutists. On the other hand, we do not subscribe to the view that because the words "separation of church and state" are not found in the Constitution, the separation concept is not there. The word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible, but the concept is clearly there. We believe there should be room for the accommodation of the free exercise of religion without such accommodation being considered "an establishment of religion" within the meaning of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The First Amendment, in part, provides: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

NAE has made every effort to be as fair as possible both to minorities and to majorities. Our purpose is to end the divisiveness the school prayer controversy has long generated by providing a constitutional framework that would enable a religiously pluralistic people to live in peace with their deepest differences. We believe a balance can be

struck on the school prayer issue if men and women of good will work together to find common ground.

Nonetheless, we expect that some strict separationists will assert that the Bill of Rights—especially the Establishment Clause—should not be "changed." However, the amendment we propose *does not change* the Establishment Clause. Rather, it *corrects* certain absolutist interpretations of that Clause by the Supreme Court which have changed its original meaning and undermined the free exercise of religion. The Establishment Clause was intended as a shield, not as a sword; it should not be construed to prohibit the reasonable accommodation of the free exercise of religion which is the core value of the two religion clauses of the First Amendment.

Nothing in NAE's proposed amendment is intended to have any adverse effect on application of the Equal Access Act of 1984 or the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993.

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Part I of this Rationale discusses the operative provisions of NAE's proposed constitutional amendment. Part II discusses the introductory clause.

## I

Section 1 affirms the free exercise of religion as a constitutional right of all students in public school. It provides that nothing in the Constitution shall be construed to deny or abridge the free exercise right of students to participate in prayer. As used in the proposed amendment, "prayer" includes individual or group religious expression, as well as vocal or silent prayer, by students in public schools before, during, or after the school day. This Rationale uses the word "prayer" in the same expansive sense.

Section 1 is intended as a corrective, in the context of student prayer, of certain absolutist interpretations of the Establishment Clause by the Supreme Court. These interpretations have met with the approval of a majority of the Court despite many impressive and impassioned dissenting opinions. They have also met with the approval of some religious and civil rights groups dedicated to an absolutist "high and impregnable wall of separation between church and state." But these absolutist interpretations of the Establishment Clause have never been accepted by the vast majority of the American people.

Year after year, poll after poll, the American people have overwhelmingly expressed their discontent with the Supreme Court's absolutist interpretations of the Establishment Clause. A rabbi's brief prayer at a public school graduation ceremony has been ruled "unconstitutional." *Lee* v. *Weisman* (1992). Even a *silent* prayer has been stuck down as "unconstitutional." *Wallace* v. *Jaffree* (1985). While individuals have rights, so does the community, including the student public school community. The American people rightly sense that there is nothing wrong—or unconstitutional—in letting a group of students who want to say a prayer say it.

Justice Goldberg was right to express

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## Brethren Inheritance

*(continued from page 9)*

did have, they felt, scriptural support. For example, many Pietists believed in a literal millennium, while all other groups at that time rejected it. They held these views as "private opinions" derived from Scripture so as not to run into problems with official church doctrine. Also many Radical Pietists (and some early Brethren) held the doctrine of universal restoration. (*See next month's article for a discussion of this belief.*)

Though the Anabaptists shared the Pietist view that the individual has the right to follow Christ apart from state interference, they limited private interpretation with another conviction that served as a counterweight. Because of their strong commitment to the corporate community of faith, they sought to come to like-mindedness on all matters of faith and practice. In discussing differences of interpretation, they aimed for consensus, for they took seriously scriptural calls to be of the same mind (see 1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 2:2). (*See also the article on "The Hermeneutical Community" that appeared in last month's* EVANGELIST.)

Although in their application of Scripture the Brethren have not always consistently upheld both sides of this balance, both emphases can be found. For example, the Brethren extended to individual Brethren the right to begin such private ventures as periodical literature and Brethren-related educational institutions during the 19th century. At the same time, they sought consensus on issues that came before Annual Meeting (the 19th-century forerunner of our General Conference).

Today, we have probably shifted the balance too far to the side of individual freedom of conscience. This may be due more to the influence of American individualism on the church, though, than to any self-conscious scriptural reason. It would be good for the entire church —local, district, and national—to use consensus in our decision-making process.

### The concept of obedience

Second, Anabaptism and Pietism have influenced the Brethren concept of obedience. When the Pietists talked about obedience to Christ, they tended to focus on scriptural admonitions that dealt with the personal devotional life. They sought an individualized application of Christlikeness. Interestingly, modern evangelicals have inherited this more individualized approach to discipleship.

The Anabaptists also emphasized obedience, but they placed more stress on following Christ and Scripture in outward, corporate ways. For example, they felt that no true church could exist without discipline. They also were committed to believer's baptism and visible expressions of love for brothers and sisters in the faith. The emphases that Pietists and Anabaptists brought to Scripture caused them to apply it in slightly different ways.

The Brethren are heirs to obedience understood both as a personal, devotional walk with Christ and as a commitment by the body of Christ, the church, to follow the biblical pattern of the early church. Both of these emphases are necessary, for true maturity in Christlikeness is both an individual and a corporate process. (Have you noticed that the maturity that Paul talks about in Ephesians 4:11–16 is the maturing of an entire church?) This understanding of (and commitment to) obedience is characteristic of the Brethren approach to Scripture.

May we, as soon-to-be 21st-century Brethren, realize that our heritage is both Anabaptist and Pietist. Our uniqueness is found in our commitment to live a faith that is maturing both individually and corporately, both inwardly and outwardly, both spiritually and biblically into the likeness of Christ. [⇧]

the concern that the Supreme Court's original school prayer decisions, if misunderstood, could eventually result in "a brooding and pervasive devotion to the secular and a passive, or even active, hostility to the religious" in public schools. But that, all too often, has come to pass. A religious vacuum pervades many public schools, despite the fact that 94 percent of Americans say they believe in God. A "religion of secularism" has become entrenched in many of the nation's public schools, as Justice Stewart predicted. The reservations of Justices Goldberg and Stewart in 1963 have become reality.

Section 1 insures that the Establishment Clause is not to be interpreted to prohibit an accommodation of the free exercise right of public school students to participate in prayer. However, this right, in the nature of things, cannot be absolute. School officials must be able to maintain discipline and provide an orderly learning environment. Therefore, in accordance with existing constitutional law, the free exercise right of students to participate in prayer would be subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions. However, any such restrictions would have to be fully justified under the strict compelling interest, least restrictive means standard of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993.

Section 2 provides three significant safeguards which protect the free exercise rights of all students:

(1) Government is prohibited from prescribing the form or content of prayer. This provision precludes the government from either composing the words of a prayer or prescribing a prayer of its choosing. It is consistent in this regard with the Supreme Court's holdings in the school prayer cases, *Engel* v. *Vitale* (1962) and *Abington* v. *Schempp* (1963).

***"The American people rightly sense that there is nothing wrong—or unconstitutional—in letting a group of students who want to say a prayer say it."***

(2) Government is prohibited from requiring any student to participate in prayer. This provision reflects the Supreme Court's holding in *West Virginia* v. *Barnette* (1943) that Jehovah's Witnesses could not be forced to salute the flag and say the Pledge of Allegiance. Note that the Jehovah's Witnesses asked only to be excused from participating in an activity which was contrary to their religious beliefs; they did not ask that the flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance be banned from the classroom.

(3) Government is prohibited from denying or abridging the right of each student to have an equal opportunity to participate in prayer according to the dictates of his or her conscience. This provision affirms a basic principle of the Bill of Rights that fundamental individual rights are not to be subordinated to majority rule. And by respecting the dictates of conscience it insures the equal rights of all students—the believer in God, the agnostic, the atheist, and those adherents of nontheistic religions such as Buddhism and Taoism. Schools should be places of respect and tolerance, not censorship. In order to protect all students from religious discrimination, school officials must maintain order and not permit a "hecklers' veto." Every religious belief, from the orthodox to the unorthodox, is entitled to equal protection of the laws. The openness section 2 fosters should help prepare students for life in a future America that daily grows more culturally and religiously diverse.

Section 3 grants concurrent power to Congress and the States to enforce the amendment by appropriate legislation because the states are most directly involved in public education.

## II

The introductory clause of the proposed amendment—"The recognition of God being necessary to secure the Creator's blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity"—is based primarily on the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed . . . .

This bold recognition of God-given rights as "self evident" truths—meaning beyond debate—radically changed the philosophy of government. Thomas Jefferson's inspiring words were revolutionary in a day when kings were sovereign and people were subjects. The Constitution was later instituted as the means "to secure these rights." Many others have since endorsed the Declaration's ringing affirmation of "God-given rights." President John F. Kennedy, in his Inaugural Address, stressed the Founders' "belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God." Martin Luther King, Jr., in his renowned Letter from Birmingham Jail, referred to "God-given rights."

The end-and-means relationship of the Declaration and the Constitution is reflected in the Preamble to the Constitution which states that the Constitution was ultimately being established in order to "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." The introductory clause of NAE's proposed constitutional amendment also draws on this language of the Preamble to the Constitution.

***"We need to signal a reaffirmation of the trust in God which makes America unique in the family of nations."***

Our purpose is not just to revive the understandings of a past that some seem to have forgotten and others conveniently ignore, but also to issue a bold challenge to the American people. Do "We, the People" still believe the Founders were correct in their recognition of and reliance on God? Our history indicates we do. The national motto is "In God We Trust." The Pledge of Allegiance proudly proclaims that we are "one nation under God." The Great Seal of the United States, represented on the back of the one-dollar bill, states "*Annuit Coeptis*," meaning "He (God) has favored our undertakings."

Yet such official acknowledgments of God are often taken for granted and dismissed as so much "civil religion." Even the reference to the "year of our Lord" 1787 at the end of the Constitution is considered meaningless by those who insist the Constitution is a wholly "secular" document. This despite the fact, as stated in the Preamble to the Constitution, that the Founders instituted our constitutional form of government to "secure the [God-given] blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity" of which the Declaration of Independence so eloquently speaks.

Enshrined on the walls of the Jefferson Memorial are his immortal words:

> God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever.

Have the American people lost the conviction that their "liberties are the gift of God"? The society in which we live has gone astray. We need to signal a reaffirmation of the trust in God which makes America unique in the family of nations. Indeed, the Founders' recognition of God and His gift of religious freedom is the bedrock principle that animates our republic, lays the moral foundation for all the other liberties we as Americans enjoy, and defines us as a people. [✝]




# Keeping the Body of Christ Evangelistically Fit

By Larry R. Baker



ANOTHER YEAR is with us, with all our resolutions for leading a better, healthier, more productive life. I was in a discount store recently, and five or six people were clustered around a clerk who was demonstrating the features of a treadmill exercise machine that was on sale. Most of these people appeared to be interested in getting into better physical condition. I hope they *use* whatever they decide to purchase, because that's the key to getting in shape—*regularly using the equipment.*

My wife and I bought an exercise machine a couple of years ago. I've used it a few times. Probably the most exercise I got was putting it together.

I take comfort in the thought, however, that "for a fat man, I'm in pretty good shape." My blood pressure is an acceptable 125/72; my total cholesterol count is under 175; and I eat a fairly good diet. Besides consuming cookies, coffee, and junk food, I drink diet soda, have reduced my red meat consumption, eat my fresh fruit and veggies, and have tried to cut unnecessary fat from my diet. Hence my conclusion that "for a fat man, I'm in pretty good shape." But I'm not in good enough shape to backpack 40 miles in the Grand Canyon or the Isle Royal, or to swim one-half mile (things I did 10–15 years ago).

*Rev. Baker is pastor of the First Brethren Church of South Bend, Ind.*

## Evangelistic fitness

It occurred to me recently that the church often looks at evangelistic fitness in much the same way that I look at my physical fitness. We know that evangelism and outreach are important. We do the elements of evangelism that are convenient and important to us and either ignore or minimize the elements with which we are uncomfortable. If we continue doing enough of these elements, we usually succeed to some degree in keeping the church stable or growing at a slow rate. Therefore we conclude that "for a church our size, we're in pretty good shape."

If I really want to keep my body in good shape for the rest of my life, I'm going to have to consider all the elements that affect its well-being, including aerobic exercise, vitamins, adequate rest, a balanced diet, and proper weight. To know what I need to do in each of these areas, I can monitor my weight, blood pressure, cholesterol level, heart rate, etc., and compare the results with those of a physically fit person. Once I am aware of those areas that need work and what I need to do to get into shape, *I just need to do it!*

I've been on successful diets several times in my life. My problem is that after losing 15 to 25 pounds, I go back to my old ways and gradually gain back the weight I lost plus a few more pounds. I have three sizes of clothes hanging in my closets, and once again I am wearing the largest size.

If I am really serious about getting in shape, I will have to *do* all the things that lead to having a fit body, not just the ones I enjoy. And I must see doing these things as a way of life, not as just a fad that I do for a few months and then go back to my old habits.

## A new self-perception

In addition, I must see myself in a new light. I must stop referring to myself as a "fat man" and start seeing myself as a "physically fit man." NOT—"for a fat man, I'm in pretty good shape," BUT—"for a physically fit man, I'm doing fine in these areas but need improvement in those areas." I must not abandon what I'm doing right, but I must *do* what I know to be in my body's best interest.

The church is in a similar position. We know a lot about evangelism and church growth. Some very good monitoring methods have been developed in recent years that can give churches a good picture of their evangelistic fitness.

*(continued on next page)*

Recently, *Passing On the Promise* has helped many churches know more about these areas.

Over the years, the church has been on various evangelism diets: the Campus Crusade "I Found It" diet; the Evangelism Explosion diet; the Billy Graham Crusade diet; the Win Arn Church Growth diet; the Ralph Neighbour, Jr., Touch Basic diet; the Carl George Metachurch diet; etc. All these diets worked to some extent.

But when the evangelism emphasis was over, many churches went back to their old ways of doing what was convenient or comfortable. They did not fully practice what they had learned. Oh, they could talk the talk. But they only walked the walk (put into practice what they learned) when they felt like it. Usually, growth slowed or even reversed, and they decided that the particular evangelism diet wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

Many Brethren churches have been participating in Passing On the Promise for over a year—some for over two years. This formal "process" will end this year for some and next year for the rest. Listening to those involved in POtP is a lot like listening to comments you might hear at a Weight Watchers meeting. You hear things like . . .

- "We gained several members in the beginning, and then it was slow going for a while."
- "It was hard for us to get with the program at first, but now we are gaining new members. It's great!"
- "This program isn't really what we're used to. We'll keep going to the meetings for a while, but I don't think it will make much difference."

### Make it a way of life

In order for churches to get the most from POtP (or from any good evangelistic diet) and in order for them to continue to improve their evangelistic fitness, they need to make it a way of life. They can't ever stop "Reaching Out in Word and Deed" or "Inviting and Welcoming New People" or "Including and Involving New People" or "Growing in Christian Discipleship" and expect to stay evangelistically fit for very long. All of these elements are important if we want to be evangelistically fit. All of these elements must be faithfully practiced—and not just discussed—if we want to stay in good shape as the Body of Christ. ***We just need to do it!***

We must also see our churches in a new way. We need to compare our churches with the evangelistically fit church of the first century. NOT—"for a church our size, we're in pretty good shape," BUT—"for an evangelistically-fit church, we're doing fine in these areas but we need to improve in those areas." We must not abandon what we are doing right, but we must *do* what we know to be in the best interest of the church and of the Body of Christ.

As the Apostle Paul wrote: "And let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up (Gal. 6:9, *TLB*). POtP and many other evangelism and church-growth programs are not meant to be fad diets. If congregations can focus on the blessings and the benefits of evangelistic fitness and not get tired of exercising, POtP (and other similar programs) can be a way of life that will keep them evangelistically fit and growing into the 21st century. We can all get excited about that prospect! [⇧]

# Look What's Happening In Some Passing On the Promise Churches

### St. Luke Brethren Church Woodstock, Virginia

Pastor Dave Benshoff reported recently:

"A week ago, I had the privilege of baptizing five and receiving those five plus five transfers into membership this past Sunday. We have had 16 total so far this year [1994] join with us. PTL!

"We have averaged 100 in worship in October and had 113 yesterday. We are also running in the high 60s in our Sunday school.

"Passing On the Promise has really made the difference in our people and their commitment to ministry and their Lord. . . .

"The Brethren at St. Luke have also organized a Facilities Task Force to begin assessing our unit here to see the needs of the present and the future.

"God has really been good to us. Please pray that he shields us from Satan's discouragement in growth."

***Editor's note:*** *It is of significance that the St. Luke Brethren Church is a rural congregation. In fact, the mailing address for the church is "3250 Back Road"! Yet, the church has experienced growth. The congregation has also developed a faith budget for the first time—nearly $64,000—and includes Fair Share Support for all denominational ministries at 106 percent of the General Conference recommended amounts.*

### Northwest Brethren Chapel Tucson, Arizona

The church had a tremendous response to *Reaching Out in Word and Deed*, the fall Bible Study/Action curriculum, according to Passing On the Promise Field Staff member Roger Stogsdill. The adult Sunday school class doubled in size. People are becoming more purposeful in "reaching out." For example, members of the church have distributed over 100 copies of *The Message of Hope* (Scripture passages from the New Testament paraphrase *The Message* by Eugene Peterson).

Prior to Christmas, the church planned a couple of "Super Satur-

*(continued on page 16)*






# Inviting and Welcoming New People

By Ronald W. Waters*

*INVITING and Welcoming New People* is the theme of the spring Bible Study/Action unit of Passing On the Promise. Every congregation should do all it can to "put out the welcome mat" for new people. Following are some ideas you may be able to use in helping your church become more "inviting and welcoming."

### Notice, but don't smother

1. New people do not like to be smothered . . . but they do like to be noticed. No one who visits your church should be able to "escape" without several people offering a welcome and engaging the person in conversation. Visitors expect greeters, ushers, and the pastor to welcome them; they will be drawn back if they find a warm welcome from people in the pew. Speak to visitors first and friends later! In his book *Attracting New Members*, Bob Bast says that the friendliness and warmth of the church is perhaps the number one thing visitors (potential members) are looking for in a church.

### Follow them up

2. Following up visitors is essential if they are to return and eventually join your church. Visits from lay persons are particularly effective. In his book *How to Build a Magnetic Church*, Herb Miller says that when lay persons make a 15-minute visit in the home of first-time worship visitors within 36 hours (by Monday evening), 85% return the following week. When that lay visit is made within 72 hours (by Wednesday), 60% are likely to return. If, however, the lay visit is delayed for a week, only 15% are likely to make a return visit. Miller goes on to say that if only the pastor visits, the results are cut in half!

For congregations where lay persons do not call on visitors, less than 15% will eventually become members. However, congregations where lay persons make a visit within 36 hours find as many as 30–40% of their visitors will eventually join the church!

Growing churches who follow up second-, third-, and fourth-time visitors may see as many as 75% of them eventually become members, according to Win Arn in *The Church Growth Ratio Book.*

### Pastors must be role-models

3. Pastors play a vital role in modeling evangelism for their congregations. Churches where the pastor is a good role model for leading people to faith in Jesus Christ will likely have many lay persons who follow that model.

### Members must get involved

4. Churches that rely solely or even mostly on the pastor to bring others to faith and membership in the church will likely be declining. As more and more members of the church become sensitive to opportunities presented by the Holy Spirit to share their faith with other persons, the church will experience a greater potential for drawing people to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

### Worship must meet needs

5. Bob Bast also says in *Attracting New Members* that the character of the worship service may be the second most important factor that visitors are looking for. The service should meet the felt needs of visitors. They should be able to understand what is going on in the service. And they should feel uplifted by it. Of course, if the members of the church do not find the service alive and exciting, they are not likely to invite friends, relatives, and neighbors to join them!

### Pray for the unsaved

6. People who have identified by name three or more people who need to accept Jesus Christ as saving Lord and who pray for them regularly often find that they themselves become the answer to their own prayers—that the Holy Spirit, in fact, opens windows of opportunity for sharing their faith in natural, nonthreatening ways.

### Examine the nursery

7. Take a long, hard look at your nursery through the eyes of a young mother. Would you want to leave your child there? Generally, people feel more comfortable leaving their child with a grandmotherly type than with a group of enthusiastic young people! Are the toys clean and inviting or are they everyone's cast-offs? Is there a quiet place where babies can sleep? Are infants and toddlers separated from energetic and awkward twos and threes? See your nursery as a ministry and staff it and equip it accordingly.

### Is parking adequate?

8. People are used to shopping centers with large parking lots that have ample spaces. They'll drive right by a church with inadequate parking. Be creative in finding

*Adapted by Rev. Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, from the* Leader's Manual for Inviting and Welcoming New People.

additional parking spaces. Consider a satellite parking lot with shuttle service for members, saving the precious spaces closest to the building for visitors and the disabled.

### Provide for the disabled

9. Jesus said, "As you've done it to the least of these . . ." (Matt. 25:40). Providing designated parking, access ramps, wide doorways, restroom facilities, water fountains, and out-of-the-aisle seating for the elderly and disabled will set your church apart from most others and show how much you really care about reaching all peoples. Also provide several designated parking spaces for first- or second-time visitors.

### Provide trained greeters

10. No one should get into or out of the church without a warm welcome. While encouraging warm, friendly greetings by everyone, there will be visitors who slip in at the last minute, sit in the back pew, and make a bee-line for the door during the closing hymn. Trained greeters should be friendly, outgoing, and able to give adequate directions. In fact, some growing churches even have parking lot greeters to serve as the front line of welcome for visitors (and members too!).

### Put up restroom signs

11. Nothing is worse than being a stranger and having to ask for directions to the restroom. In fact, many visitors will want to duck into a restroom as soon as they enter the door—they find it a familiar haven in a strange place. If your restrooms are not near the main entrance, be sure to provide clearly visible signs to them.

### Open your hearts

12. Herb Miller says, "Some churches open their doors to the public. Others open their hearts." Find ways to encourage members to take the initiative in speaking to visitors. You may feel shy around strangers. But think how difficult it must be for most of your visitors, particularly if they do not know anyone in your church!

### Ask how you failed them

13. Win Arn says repeat visitors are the most likely to eventually join the church. If people do not return for a second or third visit, they probably did not feel at home. Consider asking non-returning first-time visitors what attracted them to the church in the first place and what kept them from returning. First-time visitors are asking, "Can I find friends here? How will I fit in?"

### Provide refreshments

14. Many people lose their inhibitions about talking when they have a coffee cup in their hand. Light refreshments offer a natural opportunity for getting acquainted. Some churches provide refreshments in the entry area; others in Sunday school classes; still others in the fellowship hall. Before or after the services or both are great times.

### Use name tags

15. Many long-term church members recoil at the thought of wearing name tags. Who needs them when you already know everyone? But visitors do not know everyone. Putting a name tag on visitors merely singles them out from the crowd . . . it helps the church members get to know the visitor, but the visitor hasn't a clue about anyone else's name. Wearing a name tag is a small price to pay to "set your thermometer on friendly."

### Whom can you invite?

16. Inviting and welcoming begins with the initial invitation. Who is in your circle of influence? Whom do you know who needs the love and forgiveness of Christ? Who needs the support and encouragement of the people of God? [⇧]

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## Evangelistically Fit

*(continued from page 14)*

days" when they provided free child care for people in the community. They intend to follow up on families who take advantage of this service.

The church also dedicated its new fellowship hall and education wing in October. (*See report in December 1994 Evangelist.*)

According to Pastor David West, "Passing On the Promise was the spark that ignited the people to see that we don't 'hold church'; we 'become church.' "

### Northgate Community Brethren Church, Manteca, Calif.

Pastor Roger Stogsdill reports:

"After an extensive plateau of nine months, significant progress has again been made." He reports that two sermon series had a dramatic effect. "The first, on spiritual disciplines, challenged people to seriously live out their faith. The second, on worship, has opened the door for experimentation and challenged people to worship God personally and as families at home."

Events have included a church vision meeting, a district vision meeting, "Kumar Day" (featuring Brethren missionaries Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar of India), and family talent night (held on a Sunday evening and attended by 107).

They held their annual Thanksgiving dinner this year at another church in town to provide enough space.

The church conducted "agape celebrations" in homes every night of the first week of November. Pastor Stogsdill was out of town for meetings, so the gatherings were led by members of the deacon board. The celebrations served as the fall Communion service for the church. Though normal Communion attendance is 50–55, more than 80 signed up to take part in these unique home celebrations.

### What about your church?

We want to feature how God is using your church in unique ways to "reach out in word and deed." You don't have to be participating in the Passing On the Promise process to qualify.

Send a report to The Brethren Evangelist, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. Pictures are also welcomed and encouraged. [⇧]

# UPDATE

## BRETHREN CHURCH NEWS

## Western Brethren Gather to Plan Future Work Of Brethren Church West of the Mississippi

**Las Vegas, Nev.** — History repeated itself when eighteen Brethren gathered January 10–12 in Las Vegas to worship and pray and to make plans for the future work of The Brethren Church west of the Mississippi River.

Building on the 1994 Western Brethren Pastors' Retreat, which centered on vision, cooperative ministry, and church planting, the pastors and spouses at this year's retreat began to put "nuts and bolts" to the vision which God has given them for ministry in the West.

Westerners attending the retreat were Pastor Mark and Cathy Britton, Derby, Kans.; Pastor Reilly and Cindy Smith, Mulvane, Kans.; Pastor Emery and Sue Hurd, Cheyenne, Wyo.; Pastor Roger Stogsdill, Manteca (Northgate Community Church), Calif.; Pastor Randy Best, Stockton, Calif.; Pug Reisner, Jim McNiff, Tom Saunders, Pastor Dave West (Northwest Chapel), and Pastor Bill Brady (Tucson First), all of Tucson, Ariz. Also attending were Ashlanders Rev. Russ Gordon (Director of U.S. Ministries for the Missionary Board); Rev. Dave Cooksey (Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church) and his wife Carolyn; and Dr. Fred Finks (President of Ashland Theological Seminary) and his wife Holly.

The retreat opened with worship led by Roger Stogsdill and Jim McNiff, followed by devotions presented by Dave West. Pastor West emphasized from several passages in Mark's Gospel that the work of this retreat was about Jesus, His eternal kingdom, and the responsibility to advance the work of the Lord.

Representatives from each church then shared positive things that are happening in the ministries of their congregations. Of particular note was the announcement from the Southwest District that the Catalina Brethren Fellowship would be launched north of Tucson on January 19 with the start of a Bible study under the direction of Jim McNiff.

Discussion then centered on what the Lord would have the Western Brethren do in their areas of ministry over the next several years. Out of this discussion a vision statement developed for the Western Region, which states: "The Western Brethren seek a visible, cooperative ministry for the expansion of the Kingdom of God west of the Mississippi River."

Objectives were then formulated to implement this vision. These objectives focused on four key areas:

(1) Leadership development. The objective in this area is to target, train, and develop leaders to serve as pastors and church planters in the Western region and to encourage the development of spiritual gifts that may be employed in ministry.

(2) Church planting. Participants at the retreat recommitted themselves to the goal of planting eleven new Brethren churches west of the Mississippi River by the year 2000, and they expressed a desire to discover and maximize the potential for ethnic ministry.

(3) Communication. The goal is to communicate the Western vision and needs with The Brethren Church as a whole and to develop a strategy to promote the work and ministry of this region.

(4) Mutual cooperation. The participants pledged to cooperate in supporting one another's ministries through current district and national channels. They also will seek to improve their involvement with one another and with the Brethren denomination, and will seek to encourage eastern districts to be aware of and involved in the ministry of the Western Brethren.

The planning of the Great Western Brethren Roundup, to be held June 23–25, 1995, in Estes Park, Colo., took up the remainder of the retreat. Coordinators were selected to care for program, publicity, registration, small groups, and finances. A program of worship, praise, small group discussion time, and fellowship was established.

The three-day retreat concluded with a time of prayer for the Western Region and its churches. Special prayer with laying on of hands was offered for Jim McNiff and the new work he is undertaking in Catalina, Ariz.; and for Rev. Reilly Smith in his new work as Executive Director of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. The group was also reminded that they are part of the Brethren family throughout the nation and the world, yet with a special vision from God for the western United States, where He calls them to declare His message . . . even in Las Vegas.

*— reported by Rev. Bill Brady*

## World Relief Office Robbed At Gunpoint in Goma, Zaire

**Wheaton, Ill.** — Two men armed with assault rifles forced their way onto the World Relief compound in Goma, Zaire, on January 26 and held a World Relief female staff worker at gunpoint while the office was looted and ransacked.

The assailants, whose identity is unknown, left the staff worker unharmed after stealing office equipment. Two other World Relief staff members stationed at the Goma compound were at other locations when the robbery took place, and neither they nor any other buildings near the compound were targeted by the gunmen.

Following the incident, the staff person was in good condition and spirits. She left the compound the following day with World Relief's Goma program manager John Kimbrough to travel to the field office in Kigali, Rwanda.

The Goma office is the base of operations for World Relief's emergency response to Rwandan refugees along the Rwanda/Zaire border. Some 1.2 million refugees still remain in the area.

Despite an increase in incidents like this in and around Goma and Zaire in general, this is the first such incident encountered by World Relief staff. "Even with security risks, World Relief is operating relief programs in Goma because the need is still great," stated David Loudon, World Relief's disaster response director. "This is a tough place for all involved to do relief work, but our focus remains on the work that needs to be done to help save lives."

World Relief continues to provide food, medicine, and shelter for more than 300 unaccompanied Rwandan children, including 190 in a supervised tent shelter in Mubambiro, Zaire, approximately 20 miles west of the Goma office. There have been no security problems at this site.

"We are treating this as an isolated incident, but we are also upgrading personal security arrangements for staff," Loudon said. "We will continue to provide relief to refugees who are in desperate need," he added.

World Relief was one of the first relief agencies heading international efforts to provide food, clothing, and medical assistance to refugees during and immediately following the mass exodus from Rwanda last July.

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Not one of us has to possess earth-shaking talent. Just common sense and love will do. *— M. Auvil*

# Brethren Young People from Northern Indiana Spend Weekend Engaged in Operation Carelift

**Goshen, Ind.** — A group of young people, their sponsors, and other volunteers (86 people in all) from northern Indiana and southern Michigan made a mission trip November 3-6 to Lancaster, Pa., where they packed school supplies to be sent to Moscow, Russia, as part of Operation Carelift.

Youth from the Jefferson, Goshen, Milford, Nappanee, Winding Waters, and County Line Brethren churches were joined by young people from a Nazarene Church in Sturgis, Mich., for the trip.

The trip was the brain child of the Elkhart County Youth Pastors—Roy Andrews (Nappanee), John Howenstine (Elkhart), Dave Kline (Goshen), Jim Mobus (Winding Waters), and Billy Hesketh (Jefferson). The idea was born during one of their regular meetings at McDonald's restaurant. It grew out of a desire to provide a meaningful experience for the youth, something that would make an impact on their lives. Josh McDowell's Mission to Russia and Operation Carelift ministries, already familiar to some in the Jefferson Brethren Church, seemed to offer just what they were looking for.

Initially these youth pastors thought they would be doing great if they could get 25 to 30 young people to go. They would go in vans, find a church to sleep in, and eat at McDonald's. But God enlarged their vision and provided their needs.

They decided that the way to go was to charter a 55-passenger coach; they ended up taking two busses, which a tour company provided at cost! They thought it would be good if they could stay in a church with more amenities; they found a church with a full kitchen, a gym, and a locker room with showers, which was located close to the warehouse where they would work. They hoped for good weather; the sun shone and temperatures climbed above 70 degrees. They hoped the youth wouldn't have to miss much school; most missed only one-half day (which was probably a disappointment to most of the young people, who wouldn't have minded missing more!).

It turned out to be a rich experience for all who went. They had the opportunity to make new friends and to fellowship together on the 11-hour bus trip to Pennsylvania and back, at the church, and at the warehouse. They had times of worship together at the warehouse, at the host church, and on the bus ride home. It was a time of learning, with learning experiences provided by the warehouse staff, by Stas (Josh McDowell's Russian interpreter), and by the host church (with a charismatic miracle and healing service). But most of all, it was a time for service, as they helped pack thousands of Careboxes with tons of materials and made hundreds of salvation bracelets, all of which will be distributed in Russia.

This group was a small part of the more than 2,000 people who worked at the Carelift warehouse that weekend. By the time the weekend was over, more than 24,000 Careboxes were ready to be shipped to Russia. The boxes contained school supplies, vitamins, a copy of Josh McDowell's book, *More Than a Carpenter*, and the Gospel of John.



*At work on the Carebox assembly line.*

An added feature of the trip was a visit to the Ephrata Cloister, located near Lancaster. There they received a brief history lesson about a group that was an offshoot of the early Brethren in America.

The group returned home tired, but blessed by the rich experiences of the weekend. Some are already looking forward to repeating the experience again next year.

*— reported by Billy Hesketh, Youth Pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church*




*Youth, sponsors, and other volunteers who made the trip to Lancaster.* **Photos by Dr. Jim Hollinger**

# Convocation of Evangelical Leaders Discusses Racial Issues and Steps Toward Reconciliation

**Wheaton, Ill.** — Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal, Academic Dean for Ashland Theological Seminary; Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church; and Mr. Daryl Freeman, moderator of the Southeast Christian Fellowship (Brethren Church) of Washington, D.C., were among more than 170 evangelical leaders who gathered January 6–7 in Chicago to address the issue of racism and to discover how best to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to a bruised and broken world.

Brought together by a joint planning committee appointed by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the National Black Evangelical Association (NBEA), participants expressed the belief that the convocation may have been a watershed in racial reconciliation within the evangelical community.

Rev. David Cooksey talked enthusiastically about the gathering. He noted that the convocation brought to his attention issues of which he was absolutely unaware. He said, "It was great to be able to sit down and talk about these things without fear of anyone taking offense."

Three major plenary addresses were interspersed with times of small-group discussion. The addresses were given by George McKinney, bishop, Church of God in Christ, San Diego; William Pannell, professor, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena; and Manuel Ortiz, professor, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

During the small group discussions, attendees talked, listened, and prayed together around a series of topics presented by convocation facilitators. Reflecting on this aspect of the convocation, Harold L. Myra, president of Christianity Today, Inc., said, "The dialogue around the tables with blacks and whites in an atmosphere of great candor about racial reconciliation deepened our understanding, appreciation, and commitments."

From a long list of possibilities, those attending the convocation selected five topics for immediate consideration and action within the evangelical community. They are: unbiblical theology, repentance and forgiveness, fear and mistrust, attitudes and perceptions, and institutional racism.

A significant moment in the convocation came in the concluding session, when Don Argue, president-elect of the National Association of Evangelicals, called Lloyd Lindo and Clarence Hilliard, president and vice president respectively of NBEA, as well as Aaron Hamlin, executive director, to come to the podium. Then in a spirit of repentance and humility, he asked for forgiveness of black evangelicals for NAE's failure to be sensitive and responsive to the concerns of the black community. He also requested NBEA leaders to lay hands on him and pray for him that God would guide him when he assumes the presidency of NAE.

Organizers of the convocation plan to be meeting on a regular basis to consider how the action items suggested by the small groups can best be pursued by both NAE and NBEA.

A follow-up article to the convocation by Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal is planned for the March issue of the EVANGELIST.



***West Alexandria, Ohio*** — *The entire Webster family—Rick and Shawna Webster and their daughters, Tasha (14) and Samantha (10½)—were baptized December 18 at the West Alexandria First Brethren Church. This was the largest family baptism on record at the West Alexandria Church. The congregation received a special blessing by witnessing this entire family joining with them as the family of God. Rev. David Oligee, pastor of the congregation, conducted the baptism.*

**— report and photo by Luella Painter**



***Linwood, Md.*** — *The Linwood Brethren Church has a new "Praise and Worship" team, which has brought a new dimension of music to the church. Formation of the group is an outgrowth of Passing On the Promise, with the idea coming from the Linwood co-coordinators Ron and Sandy Miller and Paul and Linda Garver following their attendance at an Evangelism Leadership Academy. The Praise and Worship team gave their first performance on Sunday evening, December 4, and additional performances are planned for February 5 and April 2. They will also participate in the revival services planned for April 29 to May 4, when Dr. Harold Barnett will be the evangelist. Shown in the photograph are (l. to r.) Ron Miller, Sue Myers, Linda Garver, Sandy Miller, James and Allison Frado, Marylou Wilkinson, Diana Dixon, Stacy Robertson, and Paul Garver.*

**— reported by Pastor Robert Keplinger**

We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life.
*— Edwin Markham*

## From The Grape Vine



**Catalina Brethren Fellowship,** a new outreach of the Southwest District, held its first meeting—a home Bible study—on Thursday evening, January 19. Catalina is a fast-growing area north of Tucson, Ariz. Leaders of this new ministry are Jim and Sandy McNiff, members of Northwest Brethren Chapel in Tucson.

**Members of the Roanoke, Ind., Brethren Church** held an appreciation party for **Pastor Ron and Pei Burns** following the autumn business meeting. Those who attended enjoyed a social hour with Pastor and Mrs. Burns and presented them a gift. Other notes of interest from Roanoke reporter Phyllis Williams: Don and Sarah Burns are the new youth leaders at Roanoke. With the help of Pei Burns (the pastor's wife), the new youth leaders organized an orchestra, which was a pleasing part of the children's Christmas program. Several women of the church have also organized a Good News Club for elementary-age children that meets after school on Wednesdays. In December, the group went Christmas caroling to shut-ins in Roanoke, Huntington, and Fort Wayne and were treated by being taken out for lunch.

"We are seeing a revival sweep through our church as people are coming alive in their spiritual walk with God," wrote Pastor Dan Lawson in the January newsletter of the **Oakville, Ind., First Brethren Church.** He went on to point out evidence of that revival. Among the things he mentioned were the following: In December five people were baptized and seven members were added to the church. The church's cell groups are growing by leaps and bounds; a new Bible study has been started on Sunday nights (in addition to the one at the church); a women's Bible study meets regularly on Tuesday mornings; a "Moms in Touch" group has been started in which mothers get together to pray for their children and their children's school and teachers. In addition, twenty people made a commitment to read through the Bible in 1995, and the church's Living Sacrifice Workshop for the month filled up almost immediately. Other continuing ministries—Sunday school classes, W.M.S., and the churches five youth ministries—are also thriving.

**Pastor Stephen Cole** of the **Newark, Ohio, Brethren Church,** who had a life-threatening illness in late April and early May last year (*see "Spared to Continue to Preach" in the December 1994 Evangelist*), believes that the Lord spared his life a second time in 1994. And this time the Lord spared the lives of his wife and daughter as well. During the night of Wednesday, December 28, the parsonage furnace stopped working. When a repairman came, he refused to re-light the furnace, stating that it was dangerous to life and health. The heat exchanger was cracked in two places, and the pipe where the exhaust gases left the furnace was badly rusted. He asked if the Coles had experienced any symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, which, fortunately, to the best of their knowledge they had not. A new high-efficiency furnace was installed that same day. The old furnace was made in 1948, the same year Pastor Cole was born. Pastor Cole was happy it was the furnace that died, and not he!

**Pastor Brian and Amanda Moore** of the **Saint James, Md., Brethren Church** won a trip to the Rose Bowl this past holiday season. Mrs. Moore won the trip, which was co-sponsored by Sunkist Growers, Inc., and the Weis grocery chain, by entering her name in a drawing at a local Weis supermarket. The prize included air fare to Los Angeles and back, five nights at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Pasadena, and reserved-seat tickets for the Rose Bowl

*(continued on page 22)*

### In Memory

**Josephine M. Gable,** 84, January 18. Member at the time of her death of the Loree Brethren Church and W.M.S. Mrs. Gable was the widow of Brethren pastor Rev. Austin F. Gable, who died January 7, 1991. Together they had served at the Denver, Center Chapel, and Kokomo Brethren Churches, all in Indiana. Mrs. Gable is survived by one daughter, Mary Dingman of Shelbyville, Ind.; two sons, Jerry and James, both of Route 5, Peru, Ind.; seven grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren. Services were held in the Allen Funeral Home, Bunker Hill, Ind., with Pastor James Thomas and Rev. Claude Stogsdill officiating.

**Herb Kridler,** 76, January 16. Member for 62 years and deacon of the Pleasant View Brethren Church, where he also had served as usher/head usher, officer, prayer meeting cordinator, and was very active in the Laymen/Men of Mission. He also served on the Pennsylvania District Historical Committee. Services by Pastor R. Keith Hensley.

**Helen Edith Fritz Myers,** 94, January 10. Oldest member at the time of her death of the Linwood Brethren Church. Graveside service by Pastor Robert Keplinger.

**Paul Gearhart,** 78, January 5. Lifelong member of The Brethren Church of New Lebanon. Services by Pastor James F. Black.

**Betty Jean Harrington,** 63, January 2. Member for 49 years of the Bryan First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor H. Raymond Aspinall.

**B. Joan Nalley,** 61, December 28. Member for many years of the Washington, D.C., (now Southeast Christian Fellowship) Brethren Church. Services by Rev. John B. Mills.

**Cecile M. Babcock,** 82, December 23. Member for many years of the Washington, D.C., (now Southeast Christian Fellowship) Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Rickey Bolden.

**Gertrude Bradley,** 84, December 22. Member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Arden E. Gilmer.

**Taylor A. Poffenberger,** stillborn, December 20. Daughter of Erick and Sarah Poffenberger, members of the Lanark First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Jim Garrett.

**Stella Crowell,** 83, December 18. Member for 41 years of the West Alexandria First Brethren Church, where she was also a member of the Evening W.M.S. Services by Pastor David Oligee.

**Richard W. Chapman,** 78, November 22. Member of the Flora First Brethren Church. Services by Rev. Alvin Grumbling.

**James Davis,** 65 August 5. Member for 24 years and deacon of the West Alexandria First Brethren Church, where he also had served as a Sunday school teacher, moderator, trustee, church treasurer, and youth leader. Services by Pastor David Oligee.

### Goldenaires

**Raymond and Kathleen Dunn,** 60th, January 13. Members of the Loree Brethren Church.

**J. Kenneth and Florence White,** 65th, December 23. Members of the Cheyenne Brethren Church.

### Weddings

**Ami Bundschuh** to **James Quinn,** December 31, at the West Alexandria First Brethren Church; Pastor David Oligee officiating. Members of the West Alexandria First Brethren Church.

**Barbara Bouldin** to **Scott Soden,** December 27, at the Cheyenne Brethren Church; Pastor G. Emery Hurd officiating. Members of the Cheyenne Brethren Church.

**Amy Navarro** to **Frank Cornick,** December 17, at the Cheyenne Brethren Church; Rev. G. Emery Hurd officiating. Members of the Cheyenne Brethren Church.

**Joyce Smith** to **Robbin Bitner,** August 13, at the West Alexandria First Brethren Church; Pastor David Oligee officiating. Groom a member of the West Alexandria First Brethren Church.

### Membership Growth

**Roanoke:** 6 by baptism

**Linwood:** 4 by baptism

**Cheyenne:** 2 by baptism

**Pleasant View:** 1 by baptism

**Meadow Crest:** 2 by transfer

**West Alexandria:** 11 by baptism, 8 by transfer

# Little Crusader

**Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).**

## Dear Boys and Girls,

Do you love yourself? You might think that this is a strange question. But I think all of us would say that we love ourselves. We feed ourselves when we are hungry. We go to bed when we are tired. We dress ourselves in warm clothes when it's cold. And we find time to play with friends.

God tells us we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. This command is found in the Old Testament book of Leviticus, in chapter 19, verse 18. It is also repeated in many places in the New Testament. Jesus Himself repeated this commandment.

If you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself, you will want the best for that neighbor. You will want to help make him happy. You will help her when she is in trouble. But most of all, you will want your neighbor to know and love God as much as you do.

Do you know who your neighbor is? Everyone around you is your neighbor! Are you following God's words today? Do you love your neighbor as you love yourself?

**Answer the following questions.**

1. Who is your neighbor?

   _____

   _____

2. Why should you love your neighbor?

   _____

   _____

3. Do you love your neighbor?

   _____




What is one thing you do that shows you love yourself?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are two things you can do to show love to your neighbor?

_____

_____

_____

_____

# Preparations Intensify in World's Hot Spots For Billy Graham's Global Mission in March

**Minneapolis, Minn.** — Church leaders in nations experiencing violence and civil war are moving ahead with plans for Global Mission with Billy Graham, March 16–18. Their hopes for the Mission are expressed in the words of one university professor in a country near civil war: "We don't need the usual kinds of aid, we need the gospel."

Billy Graham's messages from his March 16–18 crusade in San Juan, Puerto Rico, will be transmitted by satellite in at least 80 languages to more than 1,700 locations in 165 countries. An estimated ten million people will participate in these satellite missions and subsequent video crusades in the weeks that follow. As many as one billion people will also hear one of the crusade messages from San Juan during prime-time on national television in 90 to 100 countries, covering 70 percent of the world's population.

At first it was thought that the unrest in Haiti would rule out the possibility of Global Mission in that country. Now church leaders in Haiti are making plans for a large Global Mission site in the capital, Port-au-Prince, and possibly a second site in Cap Haitien.

Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans will have an opportunity to view Mr. Graham preaching at a satellite location in a refugee camp near the city of Goma, on the eastern border of Zaire.

Many Christians in Uganda hope that Global Mission may result in a work of God among their people that could stop the onslaught of AIDS in their country, which has the highest incidence of HIV infection in the world.

The most extensive Global Mission outreach in Africa will be in the new Republic of South Africa. Crusade Chairman David Molapo said, "I think that Global Mission is playing an important role in restoring relationships and in healing this great country."

Christians in war-torn Croatia are distributing Billy Graham's book, *Peace With God*, in preparation for the Global Mission outreach in that country. One young woman found this book in her father's knapsack, returned to her after he had died fighting to defend his village. She said, "I read the book, and I found Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. The book was given to my father and I hope that he found Christ before he was killed."

Enthusiastic reports of the preparation for Global Mission are coming from Russia, where people are making decisions for Christ in "Prepare the Way" rallies. Victor Hamm, director for Global Mission for the Commonwealth of Independent States, reports that tens of thousands of Christians will be trained to counsel inquirers who make decisions at Global Mission crusades in March.

On a recent visit to northern Russia on behalf of Global Mission, Mr. Hamm preached in a maximum security prison where some of the prisoners had spent 30 years. Twenty-eight of these persons committed their lives to Christ.

Billy Graham's Global Mission to 165 countries in March is the largest single outreach in the history of the Christian church, and one of the most complex technical efforts ever attempted. According to industry experts, Global Mission is the biggest project ever attempted by satellite—even more complicated than the Olympics, due to the number of specific pathways created to reach many smaller reception centers.

### Dimensions of Global Mission

- More than 165 countries participating by satellite
- More than 1,700 Mission locations
- More than 5 million seats nightly
- More than 1 million trained in preparation, including more than 500,000 counselors
- More than 90 countries involved in special television broadcasts representing 70% of world population
- More than 80 languages into which the message will be interpreted
- More than 300 hours of transmission from 9 uplink antennas to 29 time zones using 30 satellites

In commenting on Global Mission, Billy Graham said, "The technology revolution has shrunk the world to a global village, with instant access to world news networks in even the most remote areas. It is time for the church to use this technology to make a worldwide statement that in the midst of chaos, emptiness, and despair, there is hope in the person of Jesus Christ."

## From the Grape Vine

*(continued from page 20)*

Parade and the Rose Bowl Game between Oregon and Penn State. (*The Moores, by the way, are native Pennsylvanians*). While in the area, the Moores also attended the Sunday morning worship service at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove on New Year's Day.

**Rev. James R. Black**, Executive Director of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, and his successor, **Rev. Reilly Smith**, left January 21 for a five-week visit to Brethren mission fields in India and Malaysia. While in India, they will participate in the Silver Jubliee (25th anniversary) Celebration of the Brethren Mission in India. They will return to the U.S. on February 25. Please keep them in your prayers.

The **First Brethren Church of Nappanee, Ind.**, had a dynamic year, according to Pastor Kenneth Hunn in his "Pastor's Paragraphs" in the church's January newsletter. Average worship attendance jumped from 195 to 220, a gain of 25 people with a percentage increase of over 12 percent. According to Pastor Hunn, records going back more than 20 years indicate that this rate of growth was unequaled during the past two decades.

On January 1, 1995, two home mission churches—the **Bloomingdale Brethren Church** in Valrico, Fla., pastored by Rev. David Stone, and the **Northwest Brethren Chapel** in Tucson, Ariz., pastored by Rev. David West—became self-supporting. Continue to pray for these congregations and their pastors as they seek to make ends meet financially and strive to reach out to their communities.

**Alice Tharp** was honored as lay person of the year for 1994 by the **Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church**. Though she works largely behind the scenes, she is faithful in service, regularly gives rides to those in need, bakes cookies for visitors, leads the church's sewing group, and helps wherever she can. She also serves as the church's reporter to THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST. (*Out of humility, she didn't report this news item; it was discovered in the church's newsletter*).




## Hunger and Violence Rooted In Loss of Values, Reports Claim

**Wheaton, Ill.** — Two recent reports track hunger, poverty, and escalating violence to a collapse of morality and values.

World hunger is rooted in a breakdown of humanitarian values, according to Bread for the World Institute's *Causes of Hunger: Hunger 1995. Causes of Hunger* traces hunger to a complex of societal problems, including violence, powerlessness, poverty, environmental overload, and discrimination.

The report argues that more extensive changes in politics and economics are needed to get to the roots of hunger and related social ills. "We need values—at the family level, yes—but also at the community, national and international levels," says David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World Institute.

These changes depend on moral choices which people make in their individual lives and through politics, according to *Causes of Hunger*. The report advocates the values of empowerment and justice, stewardship of human and natural resources for the common good, and affirmation of diversity and community.

The Children's Defense Fund's annual report, *The State of America's Children*, also points to a breakdown in American values as being responsible for soaring violence, the abuse and poverty which afflict millions of children. The annual report, known for its support for federal programs like "Head Start" to benefit disadvantaged children, points to collective irresponsibility for escalating violence and increasing family instability.

"Never [before] have we witnessed the threats to family stability and support for children posed by soaring out-of-wedlock birth rates among Black, Brown, and White, rich and poor alike," the report states. And "Never [before] have we exposed children so early and relentlessly to cultural messages glamorizing violence, sex, possessions, alcohol and tobacco with so few mediating influences from responsible adults."

— *source* WORLDBRIEFS *from World Relief*

### *What, No Brethren?*

### Religious Makeup Of the 104th Congress

**Washington, D. C.** — Roman Catholics, with 148, are the largest religious group in the 104th Congress, according to researcher Albert Menendez.

Protestant groups with the most members are Baptists (68), Methodists (63), Presbyterians (59), and Episcopalians (49). There are also 34 Jews, 23 unspecified Protestants, 21 Lutherans, 13 Mormons, 12 United Church of Christ members, and six "Christian" or "nondenominational Christian." There are five Unitarian-Universalists, five Christian Scientists, and five Eastern Orthodox. Three are from the Assemblies of God and the same number from the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Groups with two members each are the Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church, and Seventh Day Adventist Church. United Brethren in Christ, Christian Church and Churches of Christ, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of the Nazarene, and Pan African Orthodox each have one. Five members of congress specify no religious affiliation.

— *Source:* NAE Washington Insight

### EEOC Protects Hiring Policy of Religious Organization

**Seattle, Wash.** — The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in December upheld the right of a religious organization to hire only employees with similar religious beliefs, in a case defended in Seattle by The Rutherford Institute.

"Religious institutions cannot function if the state forces them to hire persons regardless of their religious, moral or immoral, beliefs," said Theodore Vander Wel, the Rutherford Institute attorney handling the case.

The case began in June 1993 when Youth Outreach, a non-profit religious organization based in Vancouver, Wash., placed a help-wanted advertisement in the *Portland Oregonian*. Youth Outreach, which assists troubled youth in the areas of crisis intervention, family counseling, foster care, and residential group care, was seeking a residential counselor. After interviewing Natasha Lenhart for the position, Youth Outreach declined to hire her because she said she was not a Christian.

"Such employment would have been inconsistent with Youth Outreach's usage of biblical principles," said Vander Wel. "The organization would not have been able to function according to its purposes if it was forced to hire non-Christians."

Lenhart filed a discrimination complaint with the EEOC alleging that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had been violated. In response, The Rutherford Institute demanded that the EEOC dismiss the complaint because religious organizations are exempt from that discrimination law. As a result of The Rutherford Institute's intervention, the EEOC dismissed Lenhart's complaint.

"The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's ruling bolstered the law that church and parachurch organizations can lawfully decline to hire those diametrically opposed to their beliefs," said Vander Wel.

### Religion Important to Children With Disabilities

**Brookline, Maine** — Religious faith and participation can play an important role in the lives of children with disabilities and their families, according to a noted psychologist who asserts that many professionals do not appreciate this role.

Stanley D. Klein, Ph.D., editor-in-chief of *Exceptional Parent*, a magazine for parents of children with disabilities, wrote in the December issue, "In this issue, we celebrate religion, religious education and spirituality and illustrate the progress many faiths are making in including children and adults with disabilities and their families in community congregational life."

The psychologist notes, "Sadly, the important role that religious participation can play in the lives of families is rarely discussed in meetings between parents and education and health care professionals."

*Exceptional Parent* is a monthly magazine that provides practical guidance and emotional support to parents of children with disabilities.

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# February is "Have a Heart" Month

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This month you have the opportunity to have a heart for the lost in your community.

***Who are the lost?*** **All who have not accepted the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and who have not made Him Lord of their lives. Many in our communities are lost and headed for an eternity of separation from God.**

*You can help reach the lost by giving to the "Have a Heart" offering this month.* Brethren churches will receive an offering this month — many on February 12. Up to one-half of the gift you give through your local church will provide funding to help with local outreach ministry.

The other half will help The Brethren Church with supporting costs for Passing On the Promise nationwide.

Our goal this month is ***$5.00 per person or $10.00 per family***. That's only a small amount per person, but it has the potential of paying big dividends for God's kingdom as He multiplies the gifts of Brethren people across the country.

*Thank you for your generous gift. And may God give you His heart for the lost!*

Give through your local church, or send your gift to:

***Have a Heart***
The Brethren Church
524 College Ave.
Ashland, OH 44805

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

**Have a**



**for the lost!**

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# On Seeing Death as "Gain"

By Richard C. Winfield, Editor

"FOR TO ME, to live is Christ and to die is gain," said the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians (1:21, *NIV*). I don't hear much of this kind of talk in the church today, except once in a while from the pulpit (particularly at funerals). It doesn't seem that many of us (myself included) look upon death as "gain."

In fact, quite the opposite seems to be true. We cling tenaciously to life for ourselves and for our loved ones. A friend said to me recently, "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die to get there." And that seems to be true.

Evidence of this is the extraordinary means that are used to keep people alive even in cases in which the best the person can hope for is mere existence, followed by more suffering and pain. On occasion I've been asked to pray for an elderly invalid who has come down with pneumonia or a person in a nursing home who has suffered a heart attack. I ask myself, "How should I pray for this (Christian) person? Would it be best to pray that the Lord would take him or her peacefully home?"

If we have difficulty seeing for an elderly or infirm Christian that "to die is gain," it's not surprising that we have even more difficulty seeing it for ourselves. Why is this? I can think of several reasons.

## Why we don't see death as gain

One reason is our strong attachment to this world. We don't want to leave our loved ones behind. Nor do we want to miss out on anything. We want to see our children (or grandchildren or great-grandchildren, as the case may be) grow up and make a life for themselves.

Another reason we don't see death as gain is because of fear. We fear the unknown (we've never passed this way before). We fear the experience of dying (which is usually accompanied by some pain and suffering).

Still another reason, closely related to the previous one, is lack of faith. This can range from doubts about our own salvation to doubts about whether there really is life after death.

The fact that we have life so good here may be another reason we don't see dying as gain. Jesus said that in His Father's house there are many "mansions" (*KJV*) and that He was going there to prepare a place for us. Many of us have such nice "mansions" here that we don't get too excited about having one in heaven.

It's not surprising that Christians who experience persecution, enslavement, deprivation, or other kinds of suffering have a greater longing for heaven. This explains why heaven is so evident in some of the Negro spirituals that came out of slavery. Joni Eareckson Tada has written, "Suffering is God's way of helping us get our minds on the hereafter. God wishes to instill within each of us a strong desire for the imperishable, for the incorruptible, for the inheritance that never perishes, spoils, or fades" (*Diamonds in the Dust,* Zondervan, 1993).

But perhaps the biggest reason we don't see dying as gain is because the first part of Paul's testimony is not true in our lives either, namely, "For to me, ***to live is Christ.***" How many of us can truly say that for us, Christ is what life is all about? Paul could say this. And that is why he could say that "to die is gain," because he knew that death meant more of Christ. Two verses after the one I quoted, he said, "I desire to depart [to die] and ***be with Christ,*** which is better by far . . ." (Phil. 1:23, *NIV, emphasis added*).

## We've lost our focus

I think that many of us, as Christians, have lost our focus. We are not so much interested in gaining heaven as we are in escaping hell. Having received our eternal fire insurance by faith, we focus on self rather than Christ and on life here rather than on life in heaven.

As a result, we are more concerned about physical health than about spiritual well-being. (Have you ever noticed that prayer chains usually ask us to pray for someone's physical health but rarely for someone's spiritual need or a person's salvation.) Furthermore, we are unwilling to risk our lives for Christ or to expose ourselves to danger for the sake of the gospel. We have not taken very seriously the words of Jesus, "Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:25, *NRSV*).

## What's the solution?

So what's the solution? How do we get the focus off the now and on to the hereafter? One way is by becoming more devoted to Christ. Only if Christ is important to us now are we going to want to be with Him in heaven.

Another way is by becoming more familiar with what the Bible teaches about heaven. One place to look is in the Book of Revelation. Unfortunately, so often when we study this book we focus on the plagues and the dragon and the beast and on trying to figure out what everything means. As a result, we neglect those passages that describe the incredibly exhilarating worship that takes place in heaven (chs. 4, 5, 19), and the blessedness of the existence there (chs. 19, 20).

Still another solution: Let's quit making our lives so comfortable here that we have little interest in heaven. Let's take to heart Jesus' words about storing up treasures in heaven, not on earth, remembering that where our treasure is, that's where our hearts will be also.

Rather than continually spending money to make ourselves more comfortable here, let us use those funds to send out missionaries; to start new Home Mission churches; to support our local churches; and to advance the gospel in other ways. By doing so, we can make it possible for thousands more to know the *gain* of eternal life with Christ. [⇧]

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# Evangelist

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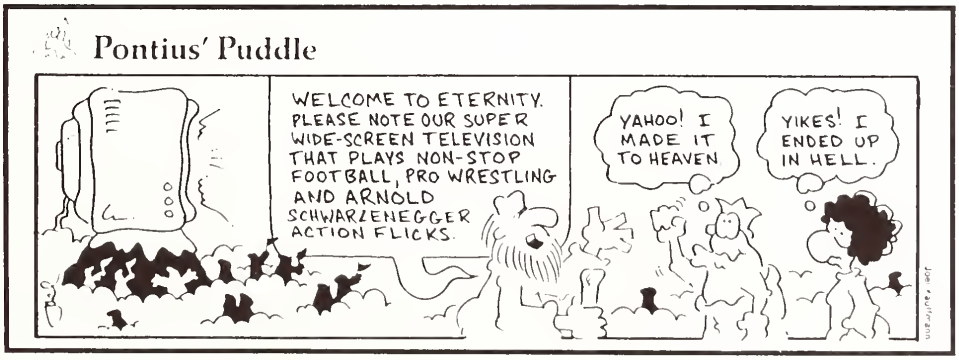
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# Work Hard, and Rejoice!

By J. Michael Drushal



I HAVE BEEN FASCINATED by the Book of Ecclesiastes ever since I read it as part of an Old Testament course taught by J. Ray Klingensmith when I was a student at Ashland University. I'm sure that I had read Ecclesiastes before then, because I had read the Bible through as a project for my Brethren Youth group while I was in high school. But we all know that you can "read" something without the content ever sinking in! Ecclesiastes has a special appeal to me, since it was written by a person who had struggled to understand the meaning of the life we have been given to live here on earth and who was very honest in reporting that struggle.

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## Forced exposure

I read several books about Ecclesiastes while trying to put together a Sunday school class in Tennessee. I was a member of a choir in a Presbyterian church there, and we rehearsed for 30 minutes before each service. This made it impossible for us to attend a regular Sunday school class.

Several of us thought it would be a good idea to start a choir class, one that could meet during the first 30 minutes before rehearsal began. While we were discussing what to study, I mentioned my fascination with Ecclesiastes, and I was promptly elected to teach!

This did not seem like much of a problem, since I had previously taught Sunday school. So I marched right downtown to the large Baptist bookstore in Nashville to purchase *Thirteen Easy Lessons on Ecclesiastes*. Well, it turned out that in 1978 no one had written such a book on Ecclesiastes, and I was going to have to make up the course myself. So I ended up reading more about Ecclesiastes than I had expected to. But I came away from the experience even more taken with this book of the Bible.

Several authors in the 20th century have tried to make a case for an author other than Solomon, but my opinion is that they are trying to appear intellectual without making much of a case. This sometimes happens in other fields of study, too. For example, some 20th-century composers have written notes on a score that purports to be "music." But that's another subject.

We can look at II Chronicles to get some idea of the kind of man Solomon was. When God asked him what he most desired, Solomon asked for wisdom. So God told him, "Since this is your heart's desire . . . therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have" (2 Chron. 1:11–12*).

Now I assume that when God says that a person will have more of something than anyone before or after that person will ever have that He means it. Therefore, this book was written by the wisest man ever to live on this earth!

It is difficult to do Ecclesiastes justice in a short article. It is one of those books that really must be read in its entirety, in one sitting. Many verses have been taken out of context and misunderstood over the ages, such as the references to eating and drinking and enjoying oneself. Each verse must be understood in the context of the whole book, so that Solomon's entire argument and conclusion can be fully understood. But let's see what we can do.

## A search for meaning

Ecclesiastes tells of Solomon's search for meaning in life. He tried everything, and he had the resources to do it right! He tried knowledge (1:18); wisdom (understanding) (2:15–17); mirth (sensu-

*Quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version.*

***"All that is required of us is that we work diligently for God and His kingdom, and He will provide us with everything He wants us to have. And that is enough for anyone!"***

ous enjoyment) (1:17, 2:3); labor (earthly endeavor) (2:11); acquisition of riches (4:7–12); high station (social standing) (4:13–16). He tried everything, even to excess. His exploits are recorded for us in other places in the Old Testament. He left nothing to chance! What did he conclude?

> I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:
> wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner,
> or wealth lost through some misfortune,
> so that when he has a son there is nothing left for him.
> Naked a man comes from his mother's womb,
> and as he comes, so he departs.
> He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand.
> This too is a grievous evil:
> As a man comes, so he departs,
> and what does he gain, since he toils for the wind?
> All his days he eats in darkness, with great frustration, affliction and anger.
>
> Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him—for this is his lot. Moreover, **when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God. He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.**
>
> *Ecc. 5:13–20, emphasis added*

I believe that this gift to which Solomon refers is the gift of not being worried about tomorrow or of living in the past (whether memories of the past are good or bad), but of being content with whatever God gives us. All that is required of us is that we work diligently for God and His kingdom, and He will provide us with everything He wants us to have. And that is enough for anyone!

One of my favorite hymns since childhood has been "Trust and Obey." I can remember singing it while seated beside my grandfather on Sunday nights in the Smithville Brethren Church. I have adopted it as my life's theme song:

> *". . . for there's no other way*
> *To be happy in Jesus,*
> *But to **trust and obey.***

## Learning to be content

Paul came to the same conclusion that Solomon reached, although he had the advantage of knowing the personal Savior and he therefore worded it somewhat differently. In fact, educated man that he was even before coming face to face with the Lord, Paul, I am sure, had read Ecclesiastes. While in prison he wrote, *". . . I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances"* (Phil 4:11). And his circumstances were a lot worse than any of ours are today.

Notice that Paul did not say that he was happy about his circumstances, but that he had learned to be *content* in his circumstances. Many times in our world today we confuse these two ideas, being happy and being content.

Then in Colossians, Paul gives us this advice:

> Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.
>
> Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And **be thankful.** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**
>
> *Col. 3:12–17, emphasis added*

To summarize all that I have been trying to say, I would like to quote the concluding paragraph from *Ecclesiastes, Total Life,* by Walter C. Kaiser as he talks about this passage from Ecclesiastes:

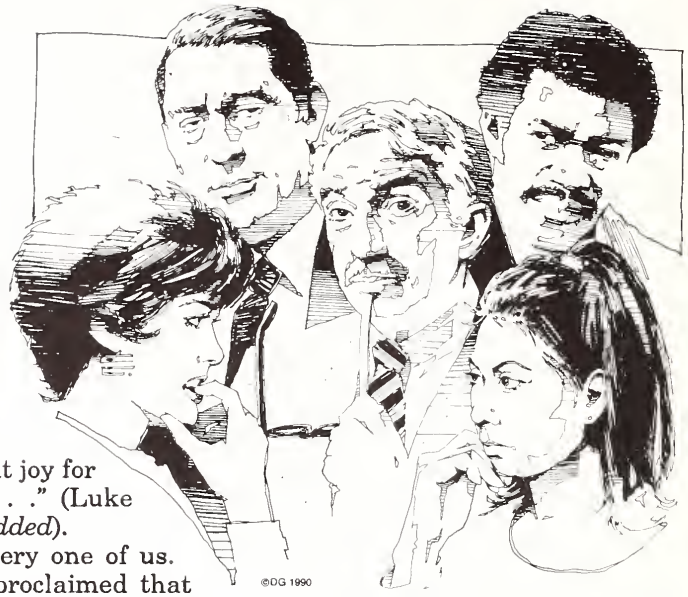
> Man must get enjoyment, not possessions. And that capacity to enjoy, no matter how great or how small, is a gift from God. It is much better to receive wealth as a gift from God, along with the God-given ability to enjoy it, than to see wealth as an end in itself. The condition for this gift is the same as in 2:26. [*To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.*] How sad that we can spend all our days working and sweating to receive the enjoyment that God offers as a gift if we will seek it in a manner that He, in His excellent and beautiful plan, has chosen to give it. Happiness, enjoyment, pleasure, and a knowledge of how the whole substance of life is integrated into a meaningful pattern in the plan of God are all linked in the living God. To know the "eternity" of all things is, if we may rephrase John 17:3,* "to know Him."

Thus the title I chose for this article: "Work Hard, and Rejoice!" How is this possible? By recognizing that God has given us His gifts. [⇧]

*"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

# Taking Steps Toward Racial Reconciliation

By Mary Ellen Drushal




WHEN the American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 was passed by Congress, Christians in churches across the country were distressed because it meant they would have to invest thousands of dollars in property renovations to accommodate disabled persons. Some objected, "We don't even have any physically challenged people in our church. Why should we be required by law to build ramps, make restroom doors wide enough for wheelchairs, and enable people to gain access to all levels of the facility?"

One thing that amazes me is that it takes an act of Congress to push Christians to care enough about the physical and emotional challenges some people live with daily in order for them to make their facilities accessible to those people. Disabled people need worship and fellowship too! Prior to ADA, most churches believed that they did not have disabled people. And they were right. *The disabled couldn't get in!* They had to watch worship services on television or listen to them on radio because access to church buildings was not possible.

## The Bible says "all"

Scripture says, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27*). Later it says, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for *all* the people . . ." (Luke 2:10, *emphasis added*).

God created every one of us. And the angels proclaimed that the birth of Jesus was good news for *all* the people. This means that each of us originated from God. All our physical attributes and any infirmities also come from God. The announcement of Jesus' birth did not come only to able-bodied people; it was given to *all*. Why God gives physical or mental prowess to one person and not to another, I do not know. What I am certain of, however, is that God loves each person unconditionally no matter what the physical or mental condition of that person is.

## God loves all

God also loves Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and all other brothers and sisters unconditionally. Why did God create so many shades of skin color, shapes of eyes, and textures of hair? Who knows? Only God. The fact is, we live in a world that is racially and culturally diverse.

Once again our Congress had to intervene with legislation to cause us to treat one another with justice and equality. One would think that Christians would automatically treat others with respect, because Christ said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). He didn't command Whites to love only Whites and Blacks to love only Blacks; or Asians just to love Asians and Hispanics just to love Hispanics. He commands us to love one another regardless of the race or culture of the "other."

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 has been in place far longer than the American Disabilities Act, and yet racism still exists in this country. On January 6 and 7 of this year, I attended a conference in Chicago on race reconciliation, sponsored by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the National Black Association of Evangelicals (NBAE).* My eyes were opened to ways racism pervades our society.

The 180 participants came from across the country. For two days we sat at tables of ten, eating together and talking about barriers to racial reconciliation and what evangelical churches could do to remove those barriers.

Have you ever walked into a convenience store just before closing time and not been served because the cashier was afraid of you? Have other children ever called your kids names which they didn't even understand, but which they nevertheless knew were not positive? Have you ever had to wait longer than anyone else in a restaurant to be served because your skin color was different from that of the other customers?

In each situation above, one per-

*Quotations from the Bible are from the *New Revised Standard Version.*

*See "Convocation of Evangelical Leaders Discusses Racial Issues and Steps Toward Reconciliation" on page 19 of the February EVANGELIST. Also attending the convocation from The Brethren Church were Rev. David Cooksey (Director of Pastoral Ministries) and Mr. Daryl Freeman (moderator of the Southeast Christian Fellowship [Brethren Church] of Washington, D.C.).

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*"Respect, dignity, compassion, and understanding are all attributes that emerge when we get to know one another. There is no substitute for time spent together to accomplish the goal of racial reconciliation."*

son is telling another, "You don't measure up to the standard." Whose standard? God's standard? Or that established by those who are "in charge" by self-imposed edict?

At the Chicago conference, we discussed a host of barriers to racial reconciliation, including fear; an unbiblical theology; lack of care, compassion, and communication; a need for repentance and forgiveness; poor attitudes and perceptions among people; and finally, institutional racism.

### Becoming part of the solution

As Christians saved by God's unlimited grace, if we aren't part of the solution, we're part of the problem. This conference made me more aware of my role in the problem of racism. With God as my witness, I declare that I want to become part of the solution.

Sometimes acts of racism are blatant and intentional. Other times they are subtle and unintentional, and people don't even think twice about what they have said or done. Often we can be self-centered, giving little consideration to those around us unless they are family members, friends, or members of our church.

*"More things make us alike than make us different; and —especially among Christians—more draws us together than separates us."*

Even the evangelism methods of the church-growth movement—seeking to reach those who are most like ourselves—have contributed to the homogeneity of our congregations. Just as Joseph's coat of many colors was a sign of favor from his father, God must view with great delight a congregation made up of people of different races and cultures with various colors of skin.

The Chicago conference on race reconciliation caused me to reflect on and appreciate the contributions that 162 African-American students and 50 international students bring to the Ashland Theological Seminary community and to my own cultural awareness. Our worship styles, our native attire, our music, and our expectations and interpretations of practically everything are different. But what a wonderful mosaic of God's message these differences provide!

That is not to say that accommodating or integrating all these differences is an easy task. But it is one that God calls us to do because He expects us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30–31). To love others as we love ourselves, whether those others live on the other side of town or in another country, forces us as Christians to be obedient to the mandates of Scripture.

Respect, dignity, compassion, and understanding are all attributes that emerge when we get to know one another. There is no substitute for time spent together to accomplish the goal of racial reconciliation. I am aware that there are a number of Scripture passages that are quoted to support avoiding racial reconciliation. But if the entire message of God's word is reconciliation, how can we continue to espouse an unbiblical message?

### We all want the same things

As our group in Chicago dialogued at the table, we learned that we all love and worship God; we all want educational opportunities for ourselves and our children; we all are concerned about health issues for our families; and we all want the opportunity to become all God intends us to be. More things make us alike than make us different; and—especially among Christians —more draws us together than separates us.

What we need are opportunities to work together on one common project or toward a mutual goal. One such opportunity will be available this June. The Leadership Development Commission of The Brethren Church is sponsoring an Urban Immersion Experience June 17–24 in Washington, D.C. We will work together during the day with various groups who minister in the Black community. Then during the evening, leadership training sessions will be conducted with committees in the church.

*"What we need are opportunities to work together on one common project or toward a mutual goal."*

You are invited to learn to know the Brethren who live in Washington. Join us as we eat, talk, and live together for a week. (Contact Deb Ritchey at the National Office—419-289-1708—if you are interested.)

### A first step for Brethren

I believe God intends for us to work together as one to begin racial reconciliation in this small but meaningful way. The recent meeting in Chicago reminded me that we need to take steps toward understanding one another. This additional opportunity for ministry together in Washington, D.C., is an important first step for Brethren.

The work toward racial reconciliation has begun, and the NAE and NBAE have led the way. While bringing 180 people together to talk is one thing, doing something concrete and tangible that can result in strengthening relationships is another. Talk is cheap; action is what counts!

This spring, a group of 35 of us will reconvene in Chicago to begin that process of planning to implement the ideas of the previous meeting. Please pray for us and the work before us, that all we do may matter, not only in the kingdom to come, but in this present day and with those most affected by racism —which is every one of us.

Jesus said to all His disciples, "Come and see" and "Follow me." May we also follow His command to love others as we love ourselves. [⇧]

# Devoted to Growth Through Worship

By Richard E. Allison

The third in a series of four articles on Acts 2:42, the 1995 General Conference theme verse.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.* Acts 2:42 *(NIV)*

BRETHREN BELIEVE that the early church is normative for us today. This means that we must attempt to restore to our churches the essential elements of early church life and practice. This does not mean that we recreate the first-century church. Rather, we seek to inquire after the underlying principles for the early church's action.

The next question is how these principles can find expression at the end of the 20th century and the begining of the 21st century. After all, this is not the first century, and to convey the same principle in our day may require a different action.

A part of the Pentecost event (recorded in Acts 2) was the coming to Christ of 3,000 persons. How is such a multitude to be assimilated into a church of 120 members (cf. Acts 1:15)? The principles are found in Acts 2:42–47. Here we are informed how the 120 went about assimilating the 3,000 (Acts 2:41).

## A devoted church

Occurring in an emphatic position in Acts 2:42 is the word *devoted.* The same Greek word is found in verse 46, where it is translated in the *New International Version* as *continued.* This word occurs ten times in the New Testament, and it means to continue steadfastly. It's found in Acts 1:14, where it identifies the kind of prayer practiced by the 120; and in Acts 6:4, where it refers to the kind of attention that the Twelve gave to prayer and to study of the word. It is apparent that *devoted* is a very strong word.

Now on what did the early church focus in this period of rapid growth? The writer tells us that first of all these believers "continued steadfastly" in the apostles' teaching. The new converts needed to understand the scriptures in a new way. They had gathered in Jerusalem for the celebration of one of the three Jewish pilgrimage festivals, Pentecost (Acts 2:1; cf. Leviticus 23:14–17 and Deuteronomy 16:9–12). Jewish in their understanding of the scriptures, these believers now become disciples (Acts 11:26).

Just as the apostles had been instructed by Jesus, so they now pass along that instruction to these new Christians. This certainly would have included reminiscences of Jesus' life and ministry, accounts of the resurrection, and interpretation of Old Testament scriptures.

It is interesting that the first emphasis in the growing church is not on moving from one dynamic outburst to another, as though Christians are to experience Pentecost every week. Rather, the early church moves immediately to the task of teaching. It kept itself straight about what it is and what it is to do.

Second, these early believers *devoted* themselves to fellowship. Fellowship (*koinonia*) doesn't happen naturally. It happens when we expend as much energy in assisting it to happen as we expend assisting the teaching ministry.

In the early church, fellowship was fostered by a close relationship (praying, worshiping, and eating together) and by caring for each other's needs (mutual aid, Acts 2:44, 45). The result of expending this kind of effort for fellowship was the "one accord" mentioned in the book of Acts (1:14; 5:12).

## The "breaking of bread"

Third, there was the "breaking of bread." Scholars disagree on how to interpret this phrase. Some see it as a meal eaten as an initiating rite. Others see it as a Jewish fellowship meal (*Haburah,* celebrated by the Pharisees). Others claim it is a paschal commemoration. Some believe it emphasized the joy of communion with the risen Jesus.

A positive determination is difficult. This is because Luke uses "breaking bread" in different ways. Sometimes it refers to an ordinary meal, as in Luke 24:30, 35; Acts 20:11; 27:35. In other places it refers to the Lord's Supper, as in Luke 22:19; Acts 20:7.

It is difficult to believe that Luke had in mind an ordinary meal in Acts 2:42. First, it seems unlikely that "breaking of bread," meaning an ordinary meal, would be placed between two such religious acts as fellowship and prayers. Luke was not concerned with how they initiated their meals in this instance. Thus it appears that "breaking of bread" in Acts 2:42 refers to the Lord's Supper. Second, a hearty meal is mentioned later for comparison in verse 46, where it says that they "ate together" in their homes.

The "breaking of bread" carries with it the joy and love connected with being in the presence of Jesus, as in the Upper Room. Thus it is likely that in this text the phrase is an early name for the Lord's Supper. The suffering and death of Christ is surely here, if only in early symbol. Paul later fully develops this thought. This is the view supported by I. Howard Marshal, F.F. Bruce, Richard Longenecker, Lightfoot, and Jeremias.

It is Jeremias who suggests that Acts 2:42 presents a very early order for worship. First, there is the

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service of the word, which includes the teaching and the fellowship. Second, there is the service of the table, the "breaking of bread"; or the Lord's Supper and the prayers. This view is supported by Pliny, governor of Bithyrmia, in the second century, the *Didache*, and Justin Martyr. Thus it becomes apparent that early Christian worship can be described as synagogue plus supper.

The synagogue probably developed when Israel was in exile. In the synagogue, the word was central, with the books of Moses arranged in a lection reading. Also, extended prayers preceded the reading of the books of Moses, and the homily or explanation followed. This order is seen in Luke 4:16–28 and in Acts 13:15–41.

Pursuing this view of Jeremias, however, takes us in another direction and beyond the intended focus of this article. It implies that the table needs to be observed at each regular gathering of the community of faith. In addition, one is led to conclude that the Lord's Supper is not a solemn time for introspection and contemplation. Rather, it is to be a time of celebration, joy, love, and praise, for it anticipates the Great Feast of Revelation 19.

The Conference theme for 1995 is "Devoted Churches . . . Grow" (through worship). The "breaking of bread" focuses our attention on worship. Kenon Callahan, through his research, has discovered that effective congregations have "corporate, dynamic worship." He reports that today unchurched persons usually find their way first to the worship service of a congregation. They are looking for a sense of belonging. They want an atmosphere where there is a strong sense of togetherness.

In addition, the liturgy needs to stir and inspire. Those who participate in the worship need to express this. Gimmicks are not effective. Outsiders want to experience a dynamic gospel that projects a message of help and hope.

### Essentials for dynamic worship

Callahan identifies five characteristics that are essential for corporate, dynamic worship:

(1) The first is warmth and winsomeness. Key words that describe the congregation in worship are grace, love, community, fellowship, sharing, help, hope.

(2) Since music constitutes forty percent of the service, it should be inspirational. This calls for planning, spontaneity, balance, variety, quality, and depth.

(3) Quality preaching, which remembers that the gospel is good news, is vitally important. Sermons must be easy to follow—they have to make sense. Struggle and drama need to be included as well. A definite relationship should be apparent between the biblical text and contemporary life. Congregations need to receive help and hope in the midst of pain, suffering, and injustice.

(4) The liturgy needs to express a sense of progression and movement. The movement is toward mission.

(5) The environment, from the perspective of the worshiper, is to be comfortable. It is neither uncomfortably crowded nor uncomfortably empty.

Callahan reports that there is a direct correlation between worship attendance, growth, and income. Therefore it behooves us to spend as much time on worship planning as on sermon preparation. This means identifying a theme for each service, coordinating the music resources and preaching good news.

Devoted churches grow through worship when they take Bible study seriously and are open to the needs of contemporary persons. [⇧]

# Looking for Love

By Ron Hutchcraft

EVERY CHILD, no matter how old, is asking for love. Meeting that need is one of a parent's most life-shaping assignments. A love-hole in a human heart, left unfilled by a mom or dad, is a blueprint for heartbreak—for both the parent and the child. There is a need for "feelable" love that only a mother and father can meet. Almost certainly, it will require sacrifice to love a child in his or her language, but nothing approaching the sacrifice of a son or daughter who gets lost looking for love—a love that child should have found at home.

*This article is from the book* ***5 Needs Your Child Must Have Met at Home*** *by Ron Hutchcraft (ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1995) and was provided by the publisher.*

If you, as a parent, should find that you are not enough to meet all your child's needs for love, you may want to go where I have often been driven —to your knees. For in the unconditional, unlimited love of God in Jesus Christ, a parent can meet his or her own deep love hunger, and find more than enough to fill a child's heart, too.

In 1976 Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme exploded onto every front page in America. She had pushed her way through a crowd and had tried to kill the President of the United States. She was seventeen years old.

Investigators found her proud that she was a follower of Charles Manson. The world knows Manson as a crazed killer who worked through his small, dedicated band of fanatical "disciples."

News magazines began to dig into the background of this tragic young woman. Their reporters found that Squeaky had felt like a misfit in her town, and so she wandered across the country until she reached California. There Charles Manson met her and promised to take care of her. She went with him and was willing to kill and die for him.

Reporters wanted to know, "Why would you give your life to a man like Manson?" I read her explanation in a magazine, and I have never been able to forget it. Squeaky explained that she had made a choice early in her teenage years. Here it is: "Whoever loves me first can have my life."

Someone probably had loved Squeaky, but she was ready to give her life to whomever made her *feel* loved first.

There are a lot of Squeakys, male and female. Whoever makes them feel loved first can have their lives.

For your son or daughter, be sure that person is you. [⇧]



Understanding the Bible

# The Early Brethren Concept of Universal Restoration

By Dale R. Stoffer

ONE OF THE REQUESTS received by the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication was to discuss the doctrine of universal restoration as held by Alexander Mack. In answer to this request, I will begin by describing Mack's position and then provide some historical background and a biblical response to the concept.

## Mack's View of Universal Restoration

Mack set forth his view of universal restoration in *Rights and Ordinances*, written in 1715:

> According to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, "the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever" (Revelation 14:11). However, that [their torment] should last for eternity is not supported by Holy Scriptures. It is not necessary to talk much about it or speculate about it. The joyous blessedness is definitely forfeited by their folly. Even if at some time the torment should end after long eternities, they will never attain that which the believers have achieved in the time of grace through Jesus Christ if they obey Him. Many who have heard about universal restoration commit the great folly not to deny themselves completely but rather hope for the restoration. This hope will most certainly come to naught when they enter the torment, and can see no end to it. Their pitiful comfort will vanish like smoke.
>
> . . . Therefore, that is a much better and more blessed gospel which teaches how to escape the wrath of God than the gospel which teaches that eternal punishment has an end. Even though this is true, it should not be preached as a gospel to the godless.[1]

The doctrine, as held by Mack and others in his time, is based on the conviction that God's love would ultimately reach all people. It was commonly held by universal restorationists that even the devil and fallen angels would eventually be restored to fellowship with God. This concept, however, should not be identified with universalism as it is customarily defined. Mack held that unbelievers would face divine judgment and punishment. But he distinguishes between a punishment that is ***ever***lasting and one that is ***long***-lasting, rejecting the former and upholding the latter.

Several other points should be made about Mack's presentation of the doctrine. He views the doctrine as a "private opinion" (*see "Our Brethren Spiritual Inheritance" in last month's* EVANGELIST) that should not be widely publicized, especially among unbelievers. Likewise, he warns against the false security of those who foolishly decide not to follow Christ, trusting in their eventual restoration. Not only will these people not attain the same spiritual status as true disciples of Christ, but their hope will be of little comfort during their time of torment.

## Historical Background to the Doctrine

The doctrine of universal restoration has ancient roots, deriving from the speculations of the third-century theologian Origin and, a century later, of Gregory of Nyssa. During the following centuries, the doctrine was upheld by many who took a more mystical and speculative approach to theology, including a few Anabaptists.

The more immediate source for the Brethren, however, was Radical Pietism. This more mystical and spiritualist form of Pietism was indebted to the German spiritualist Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) for some of its most radical ideas. Boehme, though not apparently holding the doctrine of universal restoration himself, had, nonetheless, placed great stress upon God's love.

This theme was transmitted to English followers of Boehme, notably a group called the Philadelphians, who by 1693 were teaching universal restoration. They, in turn, influenced certain German Pietists and especially Radical Pietists, among whom was Ernst Christoph Hochmann von Hochenau, the Radical Pietist preacher who "awakened" many of the early Brethren to a deeper experience of Christian faith. Presumably Mack picked up his views on universal restoration through his association with Hochmann.

Many Brethren continued to hold to universal restoration throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. An intriguing historical footnote is that a Brethren minister, John S. Price, in 1753 translated into English a book on universal restoration written by a German pastor, George Klein-Nicolai. It was this book that was instrumental in converting Elhanan Winchester to restorationism. Winchester, in turn, was an important figure in the origins of the Universalist movement in America.

*(Cont. after the* Outlook Newsletter *pages)*

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*Dr. Stoffer is assistant professor of historical theology at Ashland Theological Seminary. He serves on The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

[1]Alexander Mack, *Rights and Ordinances*, in *The Complete Writings of Alexander Mack*, ed. William R. Eberly (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1991), 98–99.

# The Woman's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Woman's Missionary Society

March–April 1995 Volume 8, Number 4

## The President's Pen

Dear Ladies,

Well, here we are three months into 1995. How quickly this past year has gone. By the time you read this, my husband, Jim, will have been to India and Malaysia and returned home. Reilly Smith, Jim's successor, went with Jim on this trip. He was introduced to the people in India and Malaysia. They participated in the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the India Mission work. They also visited with the David Loi and the David Chew families. Look for a report on their visit in a future *Evangelist*.

I was re-reading a book entitled *Make Warm Noises* by Gloria Gaither. She tells of a time when she and her husband, Bill, and their young daughter were in North Carolina for an evening concert of gospel music. They arrived at the church before the pastor, and the church was dark and the heat had not yet been turned up. Their daughter ran ahead in search of the sanctuary. She opened the doors wide and rushed a few steps into the dark auditorium, stopped, wrapped her little arms around herself, then called at the top of her voice, "Daddy! Turn the church on!"

Gloria goes on to say, "The church today has more facilities with which to work than at any other time in history. We have better buildings, fantastic tools of mass communication, and the power of united effort with other churches. Yet, with all this, there must be the warmth of the personal touch, the undercurrent of sincere concern, the gentleness of genuine love.

"Those who come to us must find not only the fixtures, but the 'Presence.' Behind the strong, oaken doors of the church, the needy must find a real strength that can make a difference in their lives. If the church is to be a tool that God can use in this century, it is we who have met Him face to face who must 'turn the church on.' "

These words were written in 1971,

*(continued on page 3)*

## PRAYERS AND PRAISES

A devotional letter from Sharon Winter

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,*
*"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,*
*plans to give you hope and a future."*

Jeremiah 29:11 (*NIV*)

Dear Ladies,

For several months I have thought I should send a greeting and share what God has been doing in our lives.

In August 1992, Bill and I saw a request in the *Prayer and Praise* bulletin for couples who might go as tentmakers to the Denver area. And, as we had done a number of times over the years when we saw notes about the needs of the Brethren in the U.S., we commented that it might be a neat place to go and serve. Well, the other times we had said it, once the words were spoken, the idea was over and done with. But this time the thought would not go away, and we began to pray that, if it were not God speaking, He take the thought away. Instead, over a period of three or four months, the thought became stronger and stronger, and we began to understand that God was asking us to leave Argentina and follow Him into a new area of ministry. We began communicating with Missionary Board personnel about our feelings and the continual circumstances that made us absolutely sure that this was what God was asking of us.

To make a long story short, when we left Argentina on July 8, 1993, we felt a lot like Abraham must have felt. All God had revealed to us at that point was that we were to leave Argentina at that time and come to Denver, Colorado.

We arrived here on Sunday morning, August 29, 1993, pulling a travel trailer, which was to be our home for the next four months. (We knew we couldn't rent or buy a place to live in because we didn't have jobs.) We found a Baptist church to attend that morning and, in the very first family we met in Denver, the husband was a missionary kid who had grown up in northern Argentina. He graduated from the same school from which Todd and Heidi graduated and where I taught for several years. We had mutual friends! This family directed us to a campground where we parked for a couple days, until we found a mobile home park that accepted smaller trailers on a monthly basis.

Once we were settled in, we began our search for jobs and getting acquainted with the city. Kay Albrecht Burgi and her husband, Phil, were a big help to us during that period of time. Within about six weeks, we both had found jobs that would pay bills and keep food on the table regularly. I didn't yet have a Colorado Teaching Certificate, so could not teach in public schools.

We had been visiting a variety of churches in the area, and about mid-October decided to attend Riverside Baptist Church. They have a Hispanic group, so we attended Sunday school in Spanish and alternated between the English and Spanish worship services. From the first Sunday we attended there until Christmas 1993, every sermon the pastor preached spoke directly to us. It either confirmed that we were right where God wanted us to be at that moment, or dealt with a specific situation we were facing. Every Sunday, we looked at each other in amazement at what we were hearing.

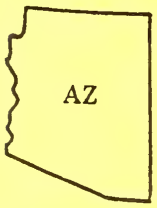
Once we had employment, we began looking at housing possibilities, though not very seriously, since we were both on entry-level wages. In mid-November, I found a little house that looked interesting. Bill drove by it a few days later and we contacted the realtor for a viewing. It was to be listed for an open house the following Sunday afternoon. We checked the paper, but found no listing, but we drove out to see it anyway. No one else had shown up!

We explained our situation to the

*(continued on page 4)*

# District Doings

## FROM A (Arizona)




Marie Fanning, the Southwest District president, reported the activities of the Tucson societies. In addition to their regular activities (meals for sick families, missionary correspondence, support for the church camp and the Community Food Bank), both groups made donations to help pay for the new roof on the sanctuary. The Evening group supports an orphan in India and the Faith, Hope, Charity group supports a missionary pastor in India.

The District Rally was January 14. A potluck salad luncheon was served at noon. Marie gave devotions, relating Psalm 46 to the New Year and trusting God for His guidance and provision. An ensemble sang "Broken Pieces."

Mrs. Marilyn Henry, the guest speaker, used the theme "Earthquakes and Aftershocks in Life." As the daughter of a U.S. serviceman, she lived in many places around the world. Her family lived in Germany when she graduated from high school. Marilyn persuaded her parents to allow her to return to the States to attend college in Ohio, where her older sister lived. And, although she was reared in a home with love and security, she drifted away from church into ways of the world. Two years later, when her parents returned to the States, she moved to California to finish college.

Through her marriage to one who was not a Christian and many difficult circumstances (a man posing to be a friend who threatened her life and raped her, and her parents' divorce after 32 years of marriage), she realized she needed God. Marilyn began reading her Bible and attending church. In time, her husband attended with her and asked the pastor many questions concerning salvation. After three hours, he received Christ!

Marilyn began teaching little children in a Christian school, teaching Bible stories from Genesis through Revelation for three years. This study helped her draw close to God. Her life and her husband's life are completely changed; they and their three sons live committed Christian lives and are very active in a Tucson church. Marilyn also works in Stonecroft Ministries.

## TO O (Ohio)




DeAnn Oburn, the Ohio District secretary, reported that the fall retreat was at beautiful Camp Bethany on October 14–15, 1994. Thirty-five women, representing ten WMS societies, came together for a time of relaxation and a look at a portion of God's Word. Again this year, our meals were lovingly planned, prepared, and served by Frank and Janet Hoffman of the Ashland Park Street Church.

As we gathered Friday evening, April Lowmaster of North Georgetown sang several of her own compositions and led us in singing together. Matha Schleinitz drew us together in our first study session.

Matha (not Martha), our speaker and discussion leader, hails from Pleasant Hill. She is a wife, the mother of a son and daughter, and Associate Professor of Human Services at Edison State Community College. Matha and her family are active members of the Salem Church of God in Clayton, Ohio.

Our topic of study was "Lives of Loyalty" and centered on Scriptures regarding Hannah and Ruth. Matha posed these questions to us for consideration: "Do I really believe and live out the fact that I have been bought with a price, and I am not my own?" and "Do my choices and decisions reflect my commitment to Christ?"

Each of our sessions with Matha was followed by some time in small groups for discussion and prayer. We discovered that we don't know "loyalty" until loyalty is tested.

Before we left Camp Bethany Saturday, Janet Sayne gave a very inspiring vocal concert. Patti Bub, the district president, announced the recipients of the Marge Fund: Kelly Hurley of Gretna, Carrie Lucas of Ashland Park Street, Kristi Paull of Smithville, Lori Robinson of New Lebanon, and Rachel Walk of Fremont. The Marge Fund was established in memory of Margery Whitted, a teacher at Ashland University and an encourager and mentor to students. The financial gift is given to qualified Brethren girls from the Ohio district who attend Ashland University.

**General Conference — August 7–11, 1995**

## THE WINNERS!

The WMS officers are always concerned about the total membership of the organization. Too often, like the fisherman, we worry about those who got away! However, Joanne Kroft tallied the new members from the membership lists submitted through mid-January, and these societies have gained members. The increase is indicated. To the new members, we welcome you. And to the societies, we give our blue ribbons!

Brush Valley +6
Burlington +2
Canton Juniorettes +2
Corinth +1
Falls City +1
Flora +1
Gratis +1
Gretna Lamplighters +2
Linwood +1
Loree I +1
Loree Charity +1
Mexico +2
Meyersdale +1
Milford +1
Newark +1
New Lebanon Eve. +2
North Georgetown (Mercer) +1
North Manchester Joy +1
Raystown +3
St. James +1
St. Luke +3
Valley +1
Vinco II +2




THE WOMAN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Woman's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
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## LETTERS IN MY MAIL BOX



From Daniel and Kathy Rosales:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour, whom we love and serve.

In the past year, we have had many different experiences in our "Iglesia de los Hermanos" in Sarasota. And in all, the Lord is victorious. We praise God for all those new members. We received 7 by transfer and 10 by conversion, and the best part is that they continue attending and growing.

Daniel reported they have many opportunities to minister to the families of the 11 children enrolled in the Day Care Center. The message Daniel preaches on Sunday is printed in the Latin newspaper each week, which is distributed to many cities in Florida. The radio ministry, "Reflexiones," is spreading into South America. In October, the program was requested by a radio station in Chile and in December the first two letters from listeners there were received.

Daniel and Kathy request your continued prayers. Your cards and letters of encouragement as well as your gifts are appreciated.



Doran and Nancy Hostetler wrote that the Riverside Alumni Day will be October 21, 1995. For the first time ever, the Alumni Association plans to auction handmade items and crafts to help raise money for the Riverside Christian School. The Alumni Association is trying to "re-energize" and this is one of the things they are doing to help Riverside.

Everyone is invited to send any type of craft to the school for their auction. Items may be sewed, built, or purchased.

Send your craft item or household utensils to Riverside Christian School, Lost Creek, KY 41348, and mark it for the Alumni Auction.



Todd and Tracy Ruggles sent their end-of-the-year letter which described some of their "down" moments; those were far outnumbered by praises and blessings. "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

They appreciate the encouragement cards and letters, financial support, and prayers. Todd said, "I think we often underestimate the power of prayer."

The Missionary Board sent cassette tapes of General Conference, which were a special blessing to them. Stuck in traffic en route to Santa Teresa for the Wednesday evening service, they listened to Reilly Smith. He was an encourager and a joy.

Todd and Tracy moved after the Missionary calendar was printed. Please use their new address:

Todd and Tracy Ruggles
Apartado Postal #45
Admon. Jesus Del Monte
Huixquillucan, edo. de Mexico
C.P. 52764 MEXICO

The Eagles and Ruggles traveled again to McAllen, Texas, to renew their visas. The Lord went before them; they had no problems. The Eagles are looking for affordable and comfortable housing in the Cuajimalpa area of Mexico City.



Juan Carlos and María Miranda "join David, the song writer, and praise God because He is our Lord, our heavenly Father, who never ever has left us alone and has shown us that His mercies endureth for ever!"

In 1994 they began publication of *The International Evangelist*, a quarterly Latin American Brethren news bulletin, sharing information about the Hispanic churches in the USA, news from the national church offices, Conference activities, and reports from the mission fields south of the border.

María's radio ministry, *Para Ti Mujer* (For You, My Dear Lady), is broadcast five days each week on almost 700 stations in 23 countries and supported by the Fuller Evangelistic Association in Pasadena, California, and The Brethren Church. This year the Missionary Board is promoting and encouraging support for the program on a local level; it is not supported from the regular budget. Faith Promise offerings or special contributions may be sent to the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, 524 College Avenue, Ashland, OH 44805, and designated for María's radio ministry. The Mirandas request that you do not hold your offerings for a special presentation; they need your support every month.

## *Missionary Miscellany*

Dave and Diane Kerner plan to retire from active missionary service in Colombia this summer and return to the States. Their definite plans are still indefinite! They covet your prayers. Dave broke an ankle this winter, and healing was complicated by his diabetes.

Ken and Carolyn Solomon are squelching the rumor that they are retiring also! Ken's health is good; they plan to remain in Colombia as long as possible.

The Northwest Brethren Chapel in Tucson, pastored by Dave West, and Bloomingdale Brethren Church in Valrico, Florida, pastored by Dave Stone, became self-supporting January 1. Keep these congregations in your prayers as they step out in faith.

The March missionary-of-the-month is Allen Baer in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Allen's home church is Goshen, Indiana. In Buenos Aires, Allen is a self-employed tutor and carries many responsibilities for the Missionary Board and the Argentine churches.

Todd and Princene Bonnett of the Walcrest Brethren Church in Mansfield and Archie and Connie Nevins of the Northview Brethren Life Church in Franklin, Ohio, are the April missionaries.

The May families are Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar in India and David and Jenny Loi in Malaysia.

Emphasis alternates between world and home missionaries, encouraging us to encircle the globe with our prayers and support. Christ came to save the world, and our missionary friends have followed the Great Commission, Go ye and teach. We are thankful for the home and national missionaries.

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### The President's Pen *(continued)*

but they apply to our church today. What can we do to "turn our church on"? Can we be more caring, more friendly, more concerned and helpful with others' problems? Let's try to be open to what God is wanting us to do.

Plans are underway for the WMS Conference in August. We will suggest some changes in the Constitution, so please look it over and send any suggested changes to your District President.

I would like to have some volunteers for the Nominating, Credential, and Auditing Committees. If you would like to help, please drop me a note soon. I look forward to hearing from you.

God Bless You,
Shirley Black

## Prayers and Praises *(continued)*

realtor (who also had an Argentine connection), and, before the week was over, we had prequalified for a loan. In three weeks, in a very tight housing market, we closed on our house. We moved in on Christmas Eve 1993 with the few belongings we had in the trailer. There is NO WAY this could all have happened as it did unless God was going before us preparing the way.

When spring arrived, we began practicing Bill's favorite sport—garage saling! We have managed to furnish our home quite reasonably.

In the meantime, we kept up periodical communication with the Midwest District Mission Board and asked God to show us the next step. It had been suggested that we take one year to readjust to the U.S. culture, but we were getting anxious to know what God wanted next. Finally Bill felt he was being directed to find a prayer partner, and we got in touch with Jerry and Darlene Armstrong, formerly from Russ Gordon's congregation in Bradenton, Florida.

The Armstrongs live just a couple miles from us and, in May 1994, we began meeting once a week to share personal prayer concerns and to begin praying for the future work of the Brethren here in the Northglenn-Thornton area. When Reilly Smith stopped for a visit about a year ago, he shared with us that our home is right in the middle of the area where the initial survey was done for a possible work here. We were unaware of this when we bought our home!

Both of us have changed jobs this year, bringing us closer to home with better hours, better salaries, and better working conditions. I am putting my Spanish to good use teaching a bilingual first grade in Denver. Bill is working in the parts department of a trucking wholesaler and also has occasion to use his Spanish.

We continue to attend Riverside Baptist, participating in the choir ministry and other areas as opportunities arise, until God shows us that it is time for us to leave and get on with His plans for us nearer our home. We continue to pray that He show us the next step. Jeremiah 23:11 says, " 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' " (*NIV*).

It has been two years since we understood for sure that this was God's call and we made the decision to accept that call. We are confident, without a shadow of a doubt, that this is where God wants us to be at this point in time. He has taken us one step at a time. Sometimes it has been difficult to be patient and wait until He reveals the next step of His plan for our lives, but we do not want to run ahead of Him and do things our own way. It has been an exciting two years, and we wait with anticipation to see what He will do next. Please pray with us that He will continue to reveal His will, and that we will recognize each step as it is presented to us. We trust and hope in Him for our future.

We appreciate your prayers and support over the years. If any of you are in the Denver area, we would enjoy sharing some time with you. Give us a call, and let's get together.

Yours in Christ,
Sharon Winter
11957 Keough Drive
Northglenn, CO 80233
Phone: 303-452-1367



*Time spent in prayer is never lost.*

Simon Lindberg

## The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

The WMS Board will meet in May to plan the WMS sessions for General Conference and to consider changes in the Constitution and Bylaws. If you have questions or areas which we should consider, please inform your district president.

We are always gratified with the good attendance at the Board meetings. The Board includes all the district presidents, in addition to the elected and appointed officers. Attending the Board meeting takes planning, especially for those who live far away. So when the ladies from the SW, SE, and Florida districts come, we are especially happy. Give your ideas to them to bring.

Jill Briscoe will speak for the WMS luncheon. Not only is she a popular speaker, she is also an author and we plan to have one of her books on the suggested reading list for next year. Plan to come and receive the blessing of hearing her before you read her book.

The National Day of Prayer is Thursday, May 4. We are blessed to live in the country where this day is especially recognized. Cooperate with your community or church observance; however, if none is planned, you be the planner.

Last fall Dorman bought a maple rocking chair at a garage sale. He could see the chair had great potential, even though it was in several pieces. After he glued it, we placed the chair in the corner of the bedroom, so now I have a comfy place to read. This is what I did a few Sunday afternoons in January. I enjoyed the chair and read *When the Glass Slipper Doesn't Fit* by Cloninger and Worley, which is one of the reading circle books. The author of Chapter 3, Karla Worley, presented Psalm 139 in a new manner. On p. 42, Karla likens me to a snowflake, unique and individually made. Not only am I an original, but I am wonderfully made for a definite purpose. I fit in a special place in God's body!

When I shirk my duty of fulfilling that definite purpose, no one else takes my place. Each other person is busy doing his/her own thing for God's kingdom, so part of God's work isn't accomplished unless I do it. Shame on me!

Earlier in the chapter, Karla gives her personal application of the Serenity Prayer, relating the prayer to their son, Andy. My application would differ and so would yours. With these phrases, adapt the Serenity Prayer to be yours:

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,*
*Courage to change the things I can,*
*And Lord, grant me the wisdom to know the difference between the things which must be accepted and the things which can be changed. Amen.*

Your friend,

Joan

Joan

*(Continued from page 10—before the* Outlook Newsletter *pages)*

***"God has done all He could possibly do through Jesus Christ to bring people into fellowship with Himself, but His judgment abides on those who resolutely refuse to believe and obey His Son."***

In spite of this connection, the Brethren maintained stout opposition to universalistic beliefs that were clearly contrary to Scripture. The Annual Meetings of 1794, 1798, and 1800 notably rejected the teachings of a certain John H. of North Carolina, who taught that God is not wrathful and would punish no one. This firm stance caused some Brethren with universalist leanings to leave the brotherhood, especially during the first half of the 1800s. In fact, some former Brethren were active in the early development of the Universalist denomination.

The doctrine continued to be held as a private opinion by many Brethren during the nineteenth century, although commitment to the doctrine seems to wane towards the end of the century, possibly due to the influence of revivalism and evangelicalism. In 1858 James Quinter observed that the doctrine was "by no means universal among us."[2]

About the same time articles began appearing in Brethren periodicals that were quite critical of the teaching. Annual Meeting ruled in 1875 that no Brethren minister should preach or debate publicly in favor of the final restoration of all people, and in 1878 Annual Meeting said that the publication and sale of books on either side of the issue would be prohibited.

The doctrine, though still present at the time of the three-way division of the Brethren in the early 1880s, did not play a part in the split. Indeed, all three branches of the Brethren (the Old German Baptist Brethren, the Church of the Brethren, and The Brethren Church) had advocates of the doctrine. Though few in The Brethren Church in the late 1800s seem to have held to universal restoration, one leading elder, B.C. Moomaw, did maintain that all souls would be restored, though their suffering would be "everlasting" before they repented.[3] Belief in universalism seems to have died out in The Brethren Church by the early part of this century, especially as fundamentalism and evangelicalism became more influential in the church.

[2]James Quinter, "Who Are the Dunkards?" *Monthly Gospel Visitor*, 8 (August 1858), 241.

## Biblical Perspective on the Doctrine

The underlying assumption for universal restoration is that God, in His essence, is love. As one work on universal restoration argued, since "the whole divine being is pure love," punishment must not be "never-ceasing and endless," but it must "aim at and be designed for their [all creatures'] final Preservation, Melioration, and Restoration."[4]

Scriptural passages often cited in support of the doctrine are Psalm 103:9; Hosea 13:14; Micah 7:18; Romans 5:18; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 26; Philippians 2:10–11; 1 Peter 3:19, 4:6; and Revelation 5:11–13. These passages, however, need to be compared with such texts as Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:47–48; Luke 13:25–30; John 3:36; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10; and 2 Peter 2:9.

Three observations can be made about the passages cited in support of universal restoration:

(1) Even though the doctrine lays stress on God's love as being the determining factor for eschatology (the doctrine of future things), none of the passages suggests that God's love is the ultimate factor in eschatology. The one possible exception is Micah 7:18, but it, like the other Old Testament texts, speaks of God's covenant love toward Israel which will preserve a remnant of His possession in spite of His anger at their sin. Though God's love is a significant motive in providing salvation (see John 3:16), it should not be isolated from His holiness and righteousness (see John 3:36).

[3]Michael L. Hodson, "Universalism," *Brethren Encyclopedia*, 1983, Vol. 2, 1293.

[4]Quoted in Dale R. Stoffer, *Background and Development of Brethren Doctrines 1650–1987* (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1989), 96.

(2) None of the passages deals unequivocally with the status of unbelievers after death. Several speak of the ultimate victory and lordship of Christ and of the life made available through Him. But their application to the issue of the future state of unbelievers is indirect at best. It is dangerous in theology to build doctrine on Scripture passages that do not directly address the issue. It is likewise dangerous to base a doctrine on notoriously difficult passages, like 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6.

(3) Nowhere does Scripture address the issue of an intermediate state for unbelievers after the final judgment. (The only intermediate state the Bible describes is that between death and the final judgment.) In the absence of any such teaching, we should approach passages which supposedly support it with a measure of skepticism.

In support of the view that the state of unbelievers is fixed for eternity, Matthew 25:46 is especially significant. The word "eternal," which is used to describe the extent and nature of the life of the righteous, is also used to describe the extent and nature of the punishment of those who are judged as accursed (see also verse 41). If the word eternal correctly describes the everlasting nature of our life with God, eternal must also describe the everlasting nature of the unbelievers' life without God.

Though such a reality is chilling, it does demonstrate both God's love and His holiness. God has done all He could possibly do through Jesus Christ to bring people into fellowship with Himself, but His judgment abides (see John 3:36) on those who resolutely refuse to believe and obey His Son. Such a realization should spur us on to the work of sharing the gospel with all people. [✞]

Questions, comments, or suggestions for the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication may be sent in care of The Brethren Evangelist, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.



# MISSIONS: Cure for a Sick Church

By James R. Black,
Executive Director of the
Missionary Board of the Brethren Church

I INTRODUCE the following comments by first of all expressing my deep appreciation to the Missionary Board (my immediate employer) and to The Brethren Church. The years I have served the board first as Director of Home Missions and Evangelism and then as Executive Director have been rewarding beyond accurate description. Few people have been privileged to have such a rewarding ministry.

## A long-held conviction

Now, in what may be my final article for the annual "World Missions emphasis month," I want to share a conviction that I have long held, a conviction that I tried to foster throughout my many years of pastoral ministry prior to my relationship with the board, and one that I have certainly attempted to promote during this relationship. That conviction is this: I really believe that missions is the cure for sick churches and might well be the healing balm for those viewed as "terminally ill."

It is generally believed that missions and mission boards depend upon local churches for their existence and therefore must actively seek assistance from those local churches. It is certainly true that without the cooperation and assistance of local churches, missions and mission boards would not be very effective.

But I would like to turn things around in an effort to reveal an even greater truth. I believe, in reality, that ***missions do not depend upon local churches for their existence nearly as much as local churches must depend upon missions for theirs.***

Something else related to this issue: I further believe that not only do local churches depend on missions for their health and continuing existence, but the pastor is the key to bringing the church to a realization of this truth. A man named Clay Cooper once said, "Missionary pews depend, to a very large extent, upon missionary pulpits." Another way of saying this is "Like pastor, like people."

I believe that most Brethren will agree that a healthy, growing congregation is one that is alive to its role in the world. That means missions at home ("Jerusalem"), and "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Missions should not be seen merely as "an arm" of the church, but as "the very heart of the church"! If a church is busily involved in activity resulting from obedience to the "Great Commission" mandate, it will have little time for the club-like activity of many organizations whose purpose is merely doing "good things." As important as such good things may be to a community, they must not be seen as the reason for the existence of the church unless such activity contributes to the effectiveness of missions.

## A side benefit

A side benefit of making missions its priority is that if a local church sees the whole world as its parish, that church will have little time for internal spats and disagreements, which too often sap the church of its spiritual energy.

I would like to challenge local congregations to become so serious about missions that they find it necessary to form a ***board*** of missions (not another committee), a board so funded and of sufficient size that it would even require its own trustees just to oversee its aggressive program. Why not? Such a board could not only revitalize the church but could really cause it to prosper.



*Rev. Jim Black, Executive Director of the Missionary Board since January 1985, is retiring from that position at the end of May.*

## A necessary change

I certainly see that a radical change in attitude toward missions might not only be helpful for a number of congregations, but that it might be absolutely essential for their spiritual health and welfare, and perhaps even for their continued existence. Whether terminally ill congregations elect to "pull their own plug" or to let the disease simply run its course, the end result will be the same. With one procedure it just takes the body a bit longer to reach the embalmer's bench.

Is your church feeling a bit "poorly" (as my mother would say)? If so, missions may be just the answer. [†]

# The Brethren Church in Mexico in 1994

By Todd and Tracy Ruggles
Brethren Missionaries to Mexico

LOOKING BACK over 1994, we are encouraged by all that the Lord has been doing in Mexico. We have had many sweet and bitter experiences during the year, but God has used both to deepen our faith in Him and to cause us to grow.

The Brethren Church in Mexico experienced a few setbacks in 1994. Early last spring we nearly lost Pastor Moises Calderón, when he suffered a severe allergic reaction to some fish he had eaten. By the grace of God he survived, and after a few months recovering from the allergy and the after-effects of the medicine, he resumed his ministry in the church in Palo Solo.

In late August, Pastor José Castro resigned as the pastor of the church in Santa Teresa. He was serving as interim pastor following a church split in 1993, until the church could reestablish itself and find another pastor. Unfortunately, he left to pursue other ministry goals before a pastor was found.

Despite this setback and the loss of its building, this church has continued to meet. It has even shown modest growth. A seminary student, David Clemente, has been holding Sunday services, and Todd has been leading the Wednesday services. David has been asked to be the pastor of the church. He has accepted and will begin full-time ministry there after he graduates in June.

With deep regret, we saw the group in Prados Del Rosario disband. The group was formed of one family. A daughter, Francis, was particularly interested in having meetings, but the rest of her family was not that committed. We had bittersweet feelings when she married last summer: sweet because she married a faithful Christian man and joined him in his ministry; bitter because she left our group and it became clear it was time for the group to disband.



*Pastor Moises Calderón (l.) chats with student pastor David Clemente.*

While God closed doors in Prados Del Rosario, He opened windows in Rio Blanco and Ciudad Azteca. Both are sites of new Bible study groups started by the church in Palo Solo. The Rio Blanco group currently has an average regular attendance of 16. Many of them are preparing to be baptized. The group in Ciudad Azteca is comprised of about five members of a family, but shows great promise.

The group in Jesus Del Monte continues to meet, but several members have become irregular in attendance. Pressures on new Christians persist as family members reject and mock their newfound faith. Pastor Ramon Hernandez has prayerfully decided to join the church-planting efforts in Rio Blanco and Ciudad Azteca. He also leads the Sunday worship service in the Palo Solo Church. The group in Jesus Del Monte misses him greatly, but we praise God for the opportunities he has to serve in the other two areas.

We have moved to the Jesus Del Monte area to have more contact with the people. We are very happy in our new apartment, and have had many opportunities to make more contacts in the community. Currently the Jesus Del Monte group meets in our home for Sunday service.

Other blessings we have experienced include the opportunity to witness the ordination of Pastor Moises Calderón and the licensure of Pastor Ramon Hernandez. We also joined in the celebration of the baptisms of Martin Ibanez Mundo from the Jesus Del Monte group, and sister Alejandra from Palo Solo.

As many of you know, the political and economic situation in Mexico has been growing more unstable. During 1994 two important government leaders were assassinated. The unrest among the poor in Chiapas erupted into armed conflict, which shows signs of possible spreading to other areas, such as Tabasco. The devaluation of the peso has added to the tension and has caused many to lose their jobs. Many people are apathetic and do not trust their government. Some are fearful for their futures as their meager salaries diminish and as conflicts in the country continue. This is an important time for us as Christians in Mexico. The need for God in the lives of the people of Mexico is very apparent.

The church is growing in Mexico despite these setbacks. We have grown in wisdom, maturity, and in numbers. In the face of the problems of Mexico, The Brethren Church in Mexico continues to be a shining—if small—light for our Lord Jesus Christ. [⇧]

*Brethren World Missions*

# Colon: A Consecrated Congregation

By Allen Baer
Brethren Missionary to Argentina

LAST YEAR the Argentine Brethren inaugurated three church buildings—at Casita de Betania (city of Rosario), Palermo (city of Buenos Aires), and Venado Tuerto (province of Santa Fe). Each of these has a story of faith and sacrificial giving behind it.

Although 1995 may not see as many church buildings dedicated, nevertheless the Brethren will be able to rejoice in the completion of one of their most ambitious projects in recent years, the inauguration of a new temple, seating 1,000, in the city of Colon.

Pastor Eduardo Rodriguez recalled recently that some may have considered the project an impossibility when they first toured the former medical clinic, which in April 1994 still occupied the future site of the church. Few leaders know their congregation better than Pastor Rodriguez knows his, however, so he could be sure that God would lead this church in unity and dedication through this project.

Members of the building committee chose Numbers 6:24—"The LORD bless you and keep you . . ." —as their theme. With this blessing, they set to work looking for funds. Using the proceeds from the sale of the missionary house formerly occupied by the Aspinalls, the Argentine Brethren Church and the Missionary Board (U.S.A.) loaned the congregation most of the money it needed to cover the cost of the property.

With these funds as a start, the committee challenged the local congregation, numbering around 300 members (18 or older) with an average attendance above that, to supply the rest of the purchase money as well as total construction costs. In addition to gifts and offerings received from members, the committee is selling bonds of $10, $50, and $100. The women prepare food items to sell, and new and used items of every description have been donated for sale. The struggle is tremendous, considering that the loans must be repaid while the costs of materials and labor continue to mount.



*Members of the Colon congregation at worship.*

The finished structure promises to be beautiful, as well as carefully designed and constructed. A covered entrance, landscaped on both sides, will lead from the street to the sanctuary. The sanctuary will have double-walled construction, providing insulation as well as acoustical benefits. At the front of the sanctuary will be a large platform. Beneath the platform will be rooms for prayer groups.

The main floor will seat 600, and a balcony supported by graceful columns will seat another 400. Pastor Rodriguez hopes that upholstered seats with armrests (as frequently seen in public auditoriums) can be used. As he said, "A church should be a place for spiritual as well as physical repose."

To think that the Colon Church is completely absorbed with construction to the neglect of other ministries is to misunderstand these Brethren completely. The church is a model of organization, being divided into six ministry groups, with each group counseled by one or more deacons or deaconesses.

Colon, a city of some 20,000, is situated about 250 kilometers from Buenos Aires, the capital. It is surrounded by some of the richest farmland found anywhere. Nevertheless, sectors of its population face many of the social and economic problems all too common today.

The Brethren there have shown their love for their neighbors by providing assistance in many ways. Currently an average of 85 children receive milk and a snack seven days a week in three neighborhoods at permanent facilities called "lecherias" or "dairy bars." Two dining rooms located in church annexes also give a hot meal to 100 children each Saturday. These services, staffed mainly by youth, receive no help except from the Colon Brethren. In addition, visitors, mainly children, are taught choruses and hear the gospel.

Brethren from the United States who have been fortunate enough to visit Colon all agree that the love and hospitality of the Brethren there is very special. [⇧]

# A Silver Jubilee Year in India

By K. Prasanth Kumar
Director, Brethren Mission in India

THE LORD has been blessing the Brethren ministry in India in a wonderful way, enabling us to reap 25 years of bountiful harvest for His glory. With heartfelt gratitude and thankfulness to the Lord, we share the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Brethren Mission in India with all Brethren around the world.

We praise the Lord for the successful gospel meetings conducted in the village of Narkedimilli. We have visited this village often, reaching out to the people with personal evangelism. As a result, 30 persons who received Christ into their hearts were baptized on January 30, 1994.

The Lenten Cottage Prayer and Fasting Meetings were begun February 16 and continued through Easter Sunday. Many non-believers were reached with the gospel during this time. We visited the villages of Timmapuram and Sankili many times in the past year, and 17 people from these villages accepted Jesus as their personal Savior and were baptized.

Vacation Bible school for children and a youth retreat for older young people were conducted in May. For the children, it was a great time of learning the word of God. We used cassettes received from the Lakeland Child Evangelism program. To God be the glory for the wonderful spiritual nurture the children received!

Special meetings for women were held at the Sewing Schools in Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, and Hyderabad. In order to reach young men and women with the gospel, a Brethren Reading Room was opened in Rajahmundry on June 25 in connection with the Silver Jubilee of the Brethren Mission in India. Numerous young men and women, especially students, are coming and reading a variety of Christian books and literature.



*Young men lined up in front of the new Brethren Reading Room in Rajahmundry.*

The Brethren Pastors' Meeting was held July 9 in Rajahmundry. On that same day, Nirmala and I left for Bombay to catch our international flight to the United States. We felt blessed to be in the U.S. for three months (July to October) and to have the opportunity in August to attend General Conference in Ashland. We were very happy to renew old acquaintanceships and also to make new friends.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Missionary Board for the preparations made to make our stay a very pleasant one. We were much honored and welcomed at every church we visited, and we are immensely grateful to pastors and the Brethren.

Upon our return to India, we began making plans for Christmas activities. We traveled to a different village every night during the Christmas season conducting Christmas Gospel Meetings. People in the villages responded very well to the message of the gospel in these meetings. The Christmas celebrations in the city churches of Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, and Hyderabad were also very meaningful. Children and youth presented Christmas playlets and sang Christmas music.

The Silver Jubilee Gospel Crusade, conducted January 27–29, 1995, proved to be the high point of all our years of ministry. We have a deep sense of gratitude to Rev. James R. Black and Rev. Reilly Smith for being a very important part of this crusade. Their spirit-filled messages were a spiritually uplifting experience for the thousands of people who attended. On the first day, 3,000 people attended, and on the second and third days 5,000 to 5,500 people came. To God be the glory! During the crusade, 88 people accepted Jesus as their Savior, and these were baptized on Sunday, January 29.

The new Boys' Orphanage was dedicated to the glory of God on January 26 by Rev. James Black. We express our sincere gratitude to all the churches and individuals that made this project a reality. You have given shelter and a dwelling place to the orphan boys.

With grateful hearts we thank the Brethren, W.M.S. groups, Sunday schools, and V.B.S. groups for sending boxes of useful supplies and for taking on various useful projects. We continue to uphold in prayer each one of you who has shared in some way in the multifaceted ministry of the Brethren Mission in India. May our good Lord continue to enrich your lives with His special blessings. [⇧]



# Mt. Zion Fellowship of the Brethren Dedicates New Church Building

**Cleveland, Ohio** — A capacity crowd filled the new 1,400-seat sanctuary of the Mount Zion Fellowship of the Brethren on January 29 for the dedication service of the congregation's new worship facility.

The new $2-million building is the first church facility of the Mt. Zion congregation. Since its beginning in December 1982 as a Brethren Home Mission Church, this congregation, formerly known as Brethren Fellowship of the Savior, had met in rented facilities.

Dr. Ronald Williams, founder and pastor of the Mt. Zion Church, gave the message for the dedication service. The theme of his message, based on Exodus 12–17, was that the principles of God are stronger than the facts of the world.

Also participating in the service were Dr. Joseph R. Shultz, former president of Ashland University and Theological Seminary, who gave a "Charge to the Leadership" of the church; and Dr. Jerry Durham, pastor of the Church of the Savior of Wooster, Ohio, who gave a "Charge to the Church." In addition, several elders of the Mt. Zion congregation led responsive readings and helped with the ceremony of dedication.

The service also included a time of praise and song by musicians and the congregation. The Praise Dancers presented "The Battle Is Not Yours." The church choir, "Voices of Koinonia," sang "None Else Can Deliver Us" and other selections composed and led by Pastor Williams and Michael Dotson, Minister of Music.

An invitation to receive Christ as Savior and for church membership was given, to which many children and adults responded. Following the dedication service, a reception was held for the entire congregation in the large family center.

Brethren Fellowship of the Savior, as the Mt. Zion church was originally called, met in three different facilities in succession before acquiring its own building. It first used St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Shaker Heights, but it soon outgrew that facility. It then moved to Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cleveland Heights, where it grew to nearly 1,000 members. The congregation then moved to the St. Benedictine Church in Cleveland, where it met until its new building was completed. The present membership of the congregation is approximately 1,600.

During its years as a Home Mission congregation (from 1983 to 1989), Brethren Fellowship of the Savior received approximately $82,000 in support from the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. In 1983 the congregation was the recipient of a Growth Partner Club Call, which totaled $13,270. The Missionary Board also made a low-interest loan of $50,000 to the congregation to help finance the new building.

The Mt. Zion congregation had to surmount some huge obstacles in its efforts to obtain its own building. It first purchased land in Solon, Ohio, but sold the site at a $10,000 loss after Solon city officials raised several objections to the church's proposed building plan. The congregation then tried to purchase land from the city of Cleveland. This purchase was delayed for some time by a dispute between Cleveland's major and city council over the selling price. Even when this was settled and the sale was finally approved, city council raised another hurdle by requiring $125,000 in "site preparation." Getting financing for construction of the building was also a problem. But finally, by the power of God and the faithfulness of His people, all obstacles were overcome, construction was completed, and the building was dedicated to the glory of the Lord.

*— reported by Dr. Joseph R. Shultz*



*A capacity crowd attended the dedication of Mt. Zion's new worship facility.*

# Little Crusader

**Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).**

## Hi boys and girls!

A lot of building has been going on at my church the last few months. We are building a new Family Life Center, with more Sunday school classrooms. It's fun to go and watch the men as they work on the different parts of the building. It's amazing to watch the builders at work using really neat power tools to make their work easier and faster. The job can certainly be done well with the right kind of tools.

Jesus gives us different kinds of tools to use when we tell others about Him. One of the tools He gives us is wisdom. Wisdom helps us to say and do the right things for Jesus. In the Bible, in James 1:5, it says that God gives lots and lots of wisdom to anyone who asks for it. Another tool God gives us is courage. Courage helps us to be strong and not afraid to tell others about Jesus. Psalm 18:29 says that when God gives us courage, we can do anything! Jesus has also given us the best tool of all, the BIBLE. The Bible—God's word—can answer any questions we may have and help us to live the way God wants us to live.

Are you using the right tools for Jesus? I hope so! When you use the right tools, everything turns out great!

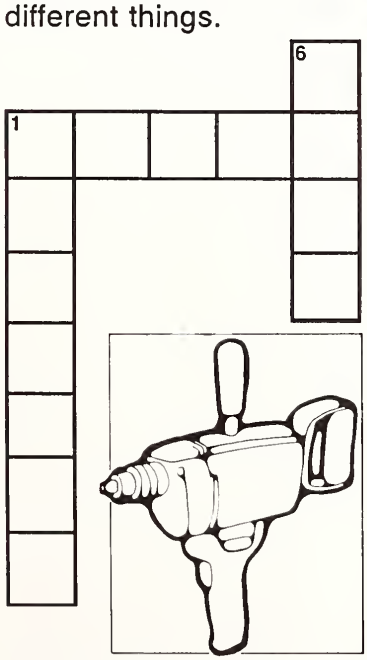
### Complete the crossword puzzle using the following words:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| wisdom | work | courage |
| help | Bible | builder |
| | tools | |

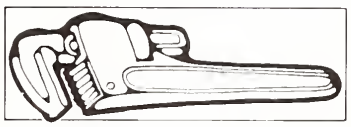
1 Across. This tool answers our questions about God and helps us live the way God wants us to live.

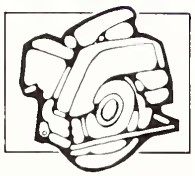
1 Down. A _____ makes lots of different things.

2. We can ____ for Jesus every day!
3. This tool helps us to be strong and not afraid.
4. _____ are used to build things.
5. This tool helps us to say and do the right things.
6. Do you _____ others get to know Jesus?

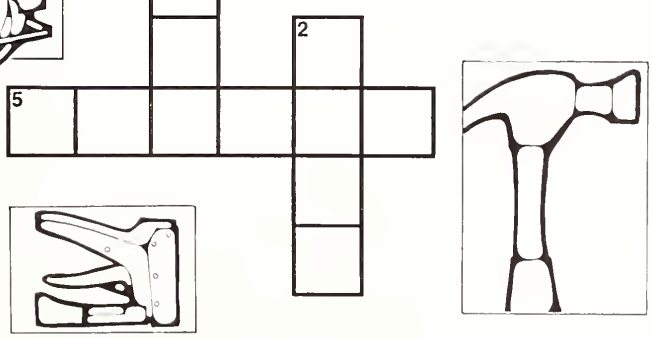








# Jon Lundy Leads Seminar at Gretna Church On "The Emotional Cycles of Marriage"

**Bellefontaine, Ohio** — Expressions of need in a relationship can lead to intimacy or result in conflict; problem solving skills can be used to guard against separation and resentment in marriage.

These principles were the heart of a message presented by Christian counselor and Ashland Theological Seminary graduate Jon Lundy at a half-day seminar held Saturday morning, January 14, at the Gretna Brethren Church. The informative and practical seminar was attended by thirty people.

Lundy, a husband and father who has a full-time Christian counseling practice in Logan County, Ohio, shared personal anecdotes and professional insights to illustrate "The Emotional Cycles of Marriage." He said that people have personal love banks into which deposits are made and from which withdrawals are taken through interactions with others. Unhappy people tend to perceive that they are experiencing too many debits and too few credits to their love accounts.

Lundy encourages couples to actively seek to develop skills that foster closeness and harmony. Such skills activate what Lundy calls the "Intimacy Cycle." In order to experience intimacy, spouses must express needs as they arise. When a need is expressed, the result is immediate relief and an expectation that the need will be met. A partner who responds to the expression of need with empathy affirms his or her mate. The person with the need feels accepted and worthy. Self-esteem, satisfaction, and contentment come when needs are met by cooperating partners.

In this connection, Lundy cites Philippians 2:1–4 (*NIV*): "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

An attitude of Christian humility in marriage enables us to see our spouses as worthy of preferential treatment and gives us an accurate view of the things we need to be working on in order to be more considerate toward them. Tenderness and compassion enable couples in a loving relationship to say, "This is what I need from you," so that the intimacy cycle can evolve.

Participants in the seminar were admonished to guard against the "Conflict/Separation Cycle," which Lundy says can grow out of selfish ambition ("My spouse is here to meet my needs") or vain conceit ("I'm great; there's nothing wrong with me"). The trouble begins when an offense is committed or when a negative response (or no response) is made to an expression of need. The partner feels hurt and rejected and attempts to resolve the bad feelings by blaming himself/herself or by blaming others. Frustration then leads to anger, resentment, and fighting.

At some point, the hurting person withdraws and becomes vulnerable to actions or solutions that are destructive to the relationship. He or she may become absorbed in other activities or even participate in an extramarital affair. Withdrawal eventually leads to bitterness and a crushed spirit. When marriage energy dies through feelings of hopelessness and despair, divorce becomes the escape route and the separation cycle is complete.

To interrupt the cycle, individuals must stop adding to hurts or keeping score and take responsibility for their own actions. "Start by trying to listen," Lundy said. Apply Christ's salvation model to restore broken relationships.

It is necessary to confess responsibility for contributing to the partner's unhappiness. But even more importantly, one must establish an emotional connection with the pain one's partner is experiencing. Repentance comes with a determination to do things differently; and forgiveness follows when a decision is made no longer to hold an offense against one's mate. Only then can reconciliation take place.

Lundy encourages couples to examine their own problems using the models of intimacy and separation cycles, and to develop a plan for problem-solving. One such plan uses the acronym SOLVE: State the problem; Outline your usual past response; List possible alternatives; Visualize how each alternative might work; and Evaluate results. Lundy also suggested that couples review how they manage their time and that they make their relationship their number one priority.

Participants rated the seminar very highly. The Gretna deacons plan to develop more opportunities for marriage enrichment in the future.

— *by Mary Hess*

## Retirement Board Makes Change In Brethren Pension Plan & Trust

**Ashland, Ohio** — The Retirement Board has voted unanimously to change the Brethren Church Pension Plan and Trust from a trustee-directed to a participant-directed plan. The change will take place effective July 1, 1995, pending the ability to make the necessary transitions by that time.

"This action was taken in response to interest expressed by many plan participants," said Retirement Board President Tim Rowsey. "We believe this change will provide each pension plan participant with a greater latitude in deciding how his pension funds will be invested."

As a trustee-directed plan, the Retirement Board members selected the money managers and determined how funds were allocated among those managers. This has created certain challenges for the board. Generally, younger persons take a more aggressive approach to investment of retirement funds and feel more comfortable taking a greater risk.

As persons approach retirement, however, they tend to prefer a more conservative approach so as to place their accumulated funds at lower risk. Because of the age spread of pastors and other participants in the Brethren pension plan, it is difficult to select a fund allocation plan that is satisfactory to all participants.

Under the participant-directed approach, the Retirement Board will select mutual funds with a variety of investment objectives. Each participant will complete a questionnaire to help the plan consultant make recommendations on how to allocate that individual's portion of the fund. Participants will be free to follow the recommendation or to determine their own allocation.

Representatives of the pension plan consultant will explain these changes in more detail at the Brethren Pastors' Retreat on April 26. Participants may also direct questions to Retirement Board President Tim Rowsey at 419-289-7007.

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We are too Christian really to enjoy sinning, and too fond of sinning really to enjoy Christianity. Most of us know perfectly well what we ought to do; our trouble is that we do not want to do it.

— *Peter Marshall*

## From The  Grape Vine

**Queen Aurandt** was honored at a celebration held January 1 at the Vinco Brethren Church in recognition of her 90th birthday. Mrs. Aurandt has been a lifelong member of the Vinco Brethren Church in Mineral Point, Pa., where she has also been active in the church's Sunday school. She served as head cook for a number of years at Camp Juniata and Camp Peniel. She is the mother of four children and has about 40 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**John and Connie Will, Edith Hoffman, and Tom Sprowls, Sr.,** were installed as deacons and deaconesses on Sunday, January 22, at the Berlin Brethren Church.

The **Bryan, Ohio, First Brethren Church** presented a check for $11,400 to the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church recently. The money was from bequests received by the church from the Kaiser and Wineland estates, and a portion of the money was earmarked for outreach/mission work. Tony Stever, chair of the Kaiser/Wineland Estate Committee, presented the check to Rev. James R. Black, Executive Director of the Missionary Board. The money was specifically given for Brethren mission work in India.

Brethren "south of the border" are sharing their activities with one another through ***The International Evangelist***, a quarterly Latin American Brethren newsletter published by Dr. Juan Carlos Miranda. The publication also includes information about the Hispanic churches in the U.S.A., news from Brethren national offices in Ashland, and notes about General Conference activities. One copy is mailed to each pastor and leader, and they make photocopies to distribute to the congregations. A cassette tape is also sent containing a message, recorded workshop, or study from some international congress or meeting. The newsletter has been well received by the pastors.

**Jan Solomon**, former Brethren missionary to Colombia, has been invited to be part of a CoMission team that will spend two weeks in the former Soviet Union leading convocations introducing educators there to a curriculum entitled *Christian Ethics and Morality: A Foundation for Society*. The team, which leaves April 12, will go to the cities of Ulan-Ude and Chita, which are located above Mongolia in the Asian part of the former Soviet Union. They will be the first CoMission team to bring the gospel to this area. Anyone interested in sharing in this ministry through prayer or financial support may contact Jan at 3789 Echo Hill Lane, Dayton, OH 45430 (phone 513-427-8487).

## World Relief Responds to Kobe, Japan, Earthquake

**Wheaton, Ill.** — World Relief Corporation of the National Association of Evangelicals, working through the Tokyo-based Japan Evangelical Association (JEA) is helping more than 61 churches hit by the recent earthquake in Kobe to rebuild.

Even though Japan has an outstanding emergency response system of its own, an earthquake of the magnitude of the one that hit Kobe creates human misery anywhere, noted David Loudon, World Relief's disaster response coordinator, in explaining why World Relief is sending aid to Japan. "This is a unique opportunity to stand with Japanese churches who are on the front-lines ministering and who need help themselves," Loudon said.

"The JEA told us that it would be a great help if they could get help from friends overseas," Loudon continued. "Given the need of the churches and church people, there was no question that we would respond."

"This is the first stage of our relief work for this calamity," reports Rev. Hiroshi Inagaki, General Secretary of the JEA. "The second stage will be a longer project of helping to keep the churches alive and to re-establish themselves."

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### In Memory

**Josephine L. Blosser**, 95, February 16. Longtime active member of The Brethren Church in New Lebanon, where she served as a deaconess and Sunday school and Bible teacher for many years. Services by Charles Wiltrout and Jim Whorton.

**Donald Leckey**, 87, February 9. Lifelong member of the Vinco Brethren Church, where he had served as Sunday school superintendent. Services by Pastor Jerry Fike.

**Clara Miatke**, 91, February 7. Member and deaconess at the Milledgeville Brethren Church, where she was also a member of the W.M.S. Services by Pastor Kenneth Sullivan.

**Mary Craft Penn**, 79, February 6. Member of the Flora First Brethren Church. Services by Rev. Alvin Grumbling and Pastor Brian Bolinger.

**Mildred Johnson**, 88, February 2. Member for 75 years of the Masontown Brethren Church, where she taught Sunday school and was Sunday school pianist for many years and was a member of the W.M.S. Services by Pastor Curt Nies.

**Edwin Neterer**, 80, January 26. Member of the Goshen First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Donald Rowser.

**Wilbur D. Whittle**, 87, January 20. Member of the Goshen First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Donald Rowser.

**Geneva Altfather**, 86, January 18. Dedicated member for 68 years of the Berlin Brethren Church, where for 62 years she served in various positions in the Sunday school, including as teacher, department superintendent, librarian, and chair of the home department. Services by Pastor Bryan G. Karchner.

**Virginia Culp**, 83, January 11. Member of the Goshen First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Donald Rowser.

**Bob Weise**, 85, December 30. Member of the Goshen First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Donald Rowser.

**Ruth Cumley**, 76, December 14. Member of the Masontown Brethren Church, where she had served as a Sunday school teacher, on the Board of Outreach, and was a member of the W.M.S. Services by Pastor Curt Nies.

**Richard Graehling**, 83, November 15. Member and deacon at the Milledgeville Brethren Church, where he had also served as a trustee. Services by Pastor Kenneth Sullivan.

### Goldenaires

**Clarence and Phyllis Oyster**, 55th, March 24. Members of the Louisville First Brethren Church.

**George and Inez Miller**, 55th, March 16. Members of the Vinco Brethren Church.

### Membership Growth

**Vinco:** 2 by baptism

**Valley:** 3 by baptism

**Pleasant View:** 1 by baptism

**Goshen:** 3 by baptism, 2 by transfer




A note from

**James R. Black**

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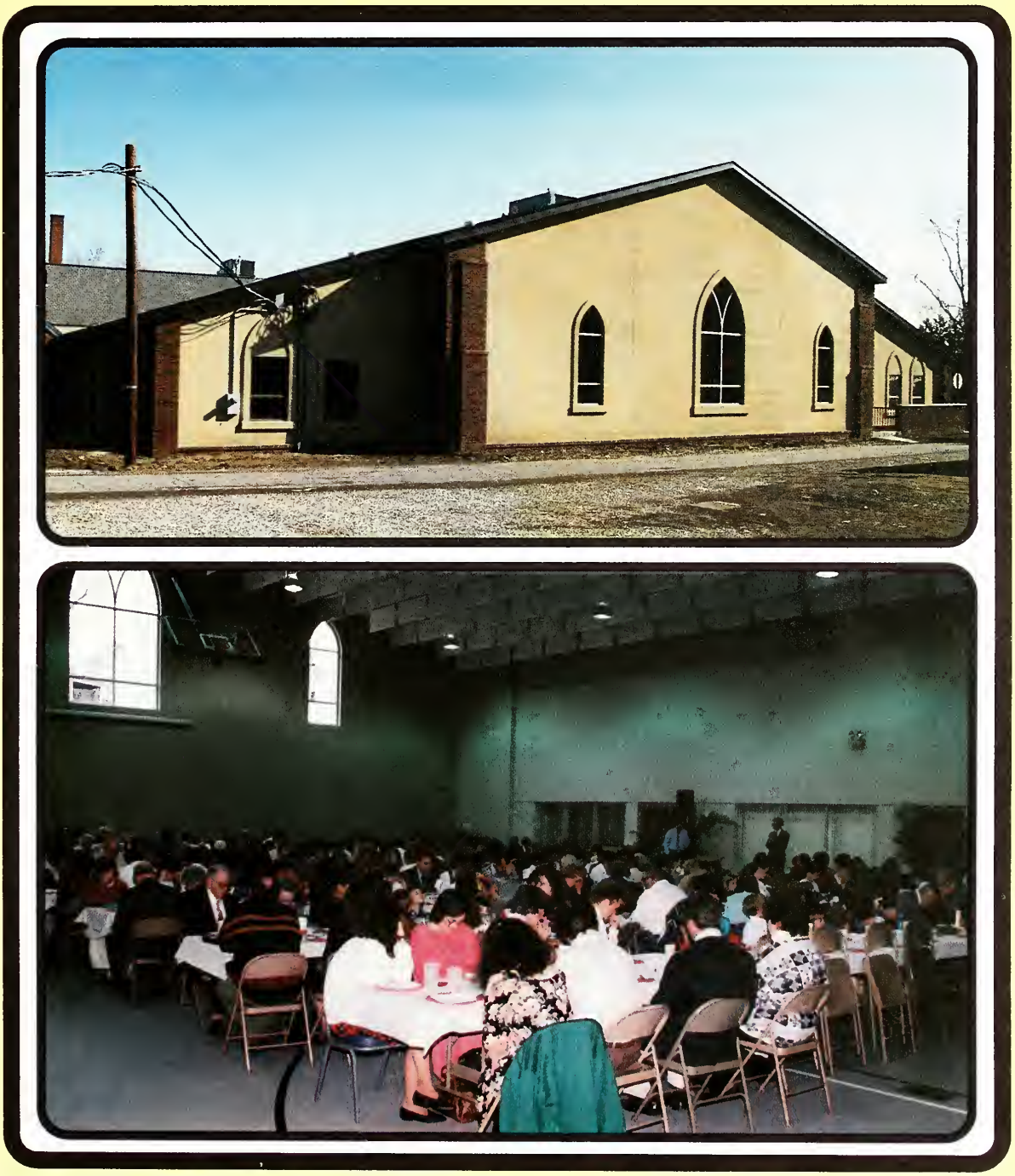
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THE BRETHREN
# Evangelist
APRIL 1995



**New Family Life Center of Park Street Church**

See pages 3 and 16.

*Seeing God's Hand at Work*

# Analogy of a Choice

By Terri Pelger

"IF JESUS CHRIST, who is God, humbled Himself to wash the feet of His disciples, can we do any less?" the pastor asked the youth of the First Brethren Church of Louisville, Ohio, as they prepared for the footwashing service. The youth were quiet and attentive as the pastor spoke these words. "Do it for Christ," he continued.

*On the other side of town, a young boy listens attentively as an older boy attempts to convert him to his way of thinking. "It's okay, man. Just try it once. Do something nice for yourself."*

As the youth entered the room where the footwashing was to take place, apprehension was visible on their faces. For many, this would be their first such experience.

*As the young boy entered the house of the drug dealer, he was filled with anxiety. He began to sweat. His heart began to pound.*

The youth began to remove their shoes and socks in preparation for the footwashing. Their eyes searched the room to see who might be watching.

*The young boy removed his coat and rolled up his sleeve. He looked around quickly, hoping no one would see what was about to take place.*

As several young people sat down in the chairs, others came forward and wrapped towels about their waists. Then kneeling, each one gently lifted the foot of the one seated in front of her and tenderly washed it.

*As the young boy sat down in the chair, the dealer took out a rubber strip and tied it around the boy's upper arm. Then he picked up the syringe and with one quick motion thrust it into the boy's arm.*

After the feet were washed and dried, the two stood and embraced. Smiles warmed each face as words of blessings were exchanged: "God bless you." It was a Spirit-filled moment none would soon forget.

*As soon as the dealer removed the needle from the boy's arm, he smiled triumphantly. "Okay, kid," he said, "this one was your free introductory offer. Be ready to pay up next time. Now get out of here." The boy walked away conscious that the emptiness inside him was still there, only much stronger now.*

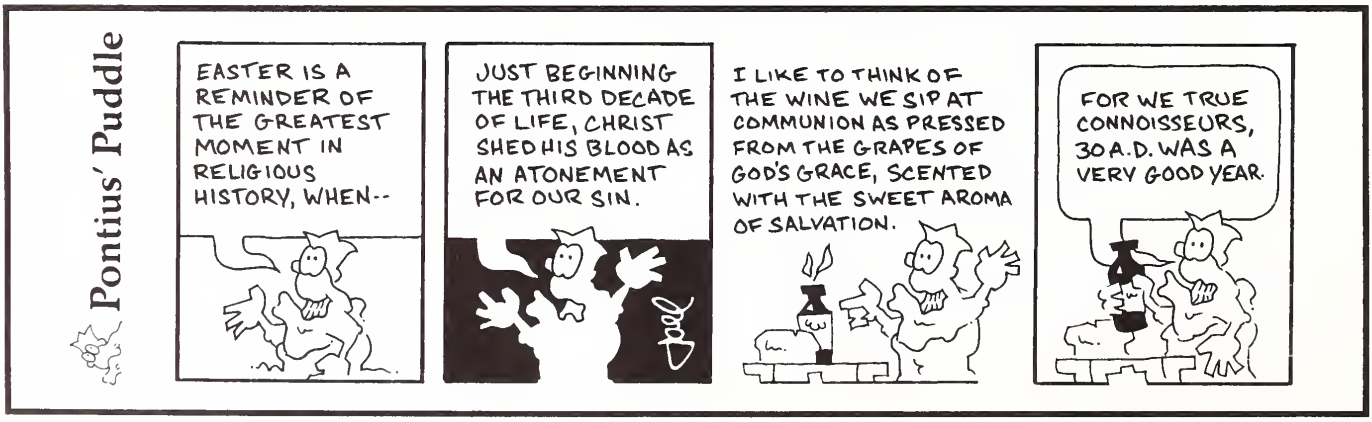
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Young people today have many serious choices to make, choices that will not only affect the rest of their earthly lives, but which could determine their eternal homes. As I watched our young people during the footwashing, I praised God that these young people have chosen to walk in **Christ's** footsteps by washing one another's feet.

". . . choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . ." (Joshua 24:15, *NIV*). [⇧]

*Mrs. Pelger is a member of the Louisville, Ohio, First Brethren Church, where she teaches young people in grades six to eight. In a letter accompanying this article, she wrote:*

> The first part of January [Jan. 4, 1995] our church had a Communion/Footwashing service for our youth. As I watched these kids participate in the footwashing service, my heart was truly touched. I was so proud of them. Most were reluctant to take part, but after Pastor [Jim] Koontz shared with them from Scripture concerning footwashing, almost everyone voluntarily joined in.
>
> As I watched the kids sincerely and tenderly wash one another's feet, I kept thinking of so many other things they could be doing this night. But instead, they were here following Christ's example of love and service.
>
> From this experience was born the idea for the enclosed story, "Analogy of a Choice." This was definitely an example of "Seeing God's Hand at Work."



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# Behold, the Empty Tomb!

By Glenn Grumbling

THERE WAS NO QUESTION that Christ's tomb was empty. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome arrived at daybreak. They testified that the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty.

Peter and John were told by Mary Magdalene that the tomb was empty. They ran to see and found an open tomb. They examined it and testified that all they found inside were the grave clothes of Jesus.

Women came bearing spices to complete the work of embalming Christ's body. They testified that the tomb was empty and that an angel told them, "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

The Roman soldiers never disputed that the tomb was empty. They had been commanded to guard the tomb and not to let His disciples steal His body. They remained obediently at their posts but were apparently awe-struck and mesmerized. There is no hint that they spoke one word to hinder the disciples from coming in streams to view the empty tomb.

The Jewish leaders never denied that the tomb was empty. Their literature states what Scripture reports that they were claiming, that Jesus' disciples came and stole His body away (see Matthew 28:11–15).

## What happened to the body?

The question that remains, therefore, is this: "What happened to the body of Jesus Christ?" Following are the major theories that have been advanced:

**The women went to the wrong sepulcher.** Yet Matthew 27:61, Mark 15:47, and Luke 23:55 all state that the women were watching when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (John 19:39) placed His body in the tomb. Besides, since it was the family tomb of Joseph, he could have corrected them if they were wrong. Also, it was the only tomb guarded by the soldiers.

***"Down through history literally hundreds of millions of Christians have testified, 'I have experienced a personal encounter with the living Christ.' "***

**Jesus only swooned or fainted, then revived inside the tomb, shoved back the stone and went to His disciples.** The evidence is clear that Jesus was dead when He was placed in the tomb. The Roman soldier's spear had brought forth a stream of water and blood from His side. The Roman captain testified that He was dead. In addition, wrapping the head in swaddling strips and saturating them with sticky spices would have prevented any passage of air to His nostrils or mouth.

**The disciples stole His body.** Those who believe this are obviously ignorant of the military efficiency of Roman soldiers. Besides, most of these disciples suffered a martyr's death for testifying that Jesus rose from the dead and that they had seen Him, heard Him, and touched Him. It is beyond belief that they would die to the last man for a lie.

**The Roman or Jewish authorities removed His body.** These were the people who bemoaned the fact that the disciples were "turning the world upside down" with their message of Christ's resurrection. All they would have had to do to put an end to it was to produce the body of Jesus.

Therefore, none of these theories about what happened to the body of Jesus Christ could be correct. There is only one theory that can be true. And that is that **Christ rose bodily from the dead.**

Literally hundreds of disciples gave fervent testimony that they had seen and heard Jesus after His death and burial. They were so convinced that this was fact that, within their generation, they took the message of His death and resurrection to every known nation.

To deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ, one must deny that God's word, the Bible, is true. The Bible from beginning to end is saturated with the facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## "I have met the Lord!"

Down through history literally hundreds of millions of Christians have testified, "I have experienced a personal encounter with the living Christ." These people have come from every rank and station in life, from every age group and every nationality.

If someone were to write an essay proving the existence of my wife, I doubt that I would read it, except for amusement. Because of my personal relationship with my wife, no one who could cause me to doubt her existence.

When someone has truly met Jesus in an experience of saving faith, it doesn't matter how many skeptical arguments are marshaled against that person's belief. He or she smiles and says:

*You ask me how I know He lives?*
*He lives within my heart.*

If you haven't met Him, He stands ready to become your personal acquaintance and your Savior and Lord! [⇧]

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*Rev. Grumbling currently pastors the College Corner Brethren Church near Wabash, Ind., but will begin pastoring the Second Brethren Church in Johnstown, Pa., in May. This article originally appeared in the College Corner Church newsletter.*

# Should The Brethren Church Accept into Membership People Previously Baptized By *Any Form* of Believer Baptism?

By Dale R. Stoffer

*At the 1994 General Conference, Dr. Dale Stoffer made a motion that "the National Association of Brethren Church Elders be charged with studying the issue of the reception of people into local church membership who had previously been baptized by any form of believer's baptism . . . ." The motion was adopted by the Conference. At the request of the editor, Dr. Stoffer wrote the following article telling why he brought this issue before Conference and presenting his views on the issue.*

THE QUESTION which forms the title of this article is a question with which I have wrestled for well over ten years. I would like to share some of my thoughts about this question as well as the reasons why I brought the issue before General Conference last year.

## Reasons for raising this Issue

At the outset I must stress that I raised the issue not because I question whether trine immersion is the most meaningful form of baptism. I am probably as strong an advocate for the practice of trine immersion as anyone. I would never consider baptizing any *new* believer by any other form. I certainly did not raise this issue because I enjoy controversy or because I thought it was more important than some of the other issues before us.

There are three reasons why I raised it. First is my commitment to the process of consensus. When Brethren come to a decision on a matter, I believe, because of my commitment to the body of Christ, that I must abide by that decision. Even though I have serious reservations about the present Brethren stance that believers baptized by a form other than immersion must be rebaptized, I have always counseled that such people had to be rebaptized. Consensus means that I need to submit my view to the position officially adopted by the Brethren.

But consensus also means that if I disagree with a position on scriptural grounds, I need to seek the counsel of the Brethren, no matter how controversial the issue may appear. As Brethren, we do not believe that we have the right to do our own thing independent of the rest of the body. Though this qualifies as American rugged individualism, it is not biblical. (*Read the book of 1 Corinthians and see what Paul thought about the individualism and divisiveness of the Corinthian Christians.*)

If I disagree with an official position of the Brethren, I am obligated to seek the counsel of the Brethren, to study the issue together with my brothers and sisters, to search Scripture and be open to the leading of the Spirit of truth. If the Brethren, after seeking the counsel of Scripture and the leading of the Spirit, decide to retain the present practice, then I will continue to abide by the decision.

All too often, however, either we as Brethren are afraid to raise difficult issues out of fear of conflict, or we follow the American trait of doing our own thing. Either way the spiritual unity and welfare of the body of Christ are compromised because issues are not maturely addressed and talked through to a resolution. This process of resolving issues is what the early Brethren referred to as seeking the mind of Christ.

The second reason I raise this issue is that I believe our present position is not true to Scripture. I fear that our claim to being a people who base their doctrine and practice on Scripture above all else is being jeopardized.

The third reason is that this issue is a matter of personal conscience for me. I will elaborate on these two points in the following discussion.

### Glossary

**Believer('s) baptism** — baptism of a person who has confessed belief in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (It contrasts with baptism of infants.)

**Believer(s') immersion** — any baptism in which a *believer* (a person who has confessed belief in Jesus Christ) is *immersed* (dipped, dunked) into the water. The immersion could be backward or forward, one time or more than once. (It contrasts with believer baptism in which water is *sprinkled* or *poured* on the person.)

**Trine** — threefold, triple

**Trine immersion** — baptism in which a person (believer) is *immersed* (dipped) into the water *three times* (in Brethren practice, three times forward from a kneeling position).

## Problems raised by our present practice

For a number of reasons I have serious reservations about our present practice of requiring rebaptism of believers who were baptized by pouring or sprinkling. (I am speaking only of people who have been baptized after having confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.)

## The biblical issue

The first and most important reason for my reservations is the biblical problem with our position. All too often the most important

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consideration in this entire issue is given little attention: what is the theological meaning of baptism? What are we declaring, according to the Bible, when we baptize someone? We need to begin here because any specific form or action derives its significance from the truths it seeks to convey. I would ask each person reading this article to do his or her own study of the passages I cite, because as Brethren we affirm that our final authority for all questions of faith and practice is Scripture.

Below are the main Scripture passages dealing with baptism and, as I understand it, the meaning of the act of baptism presented by each text.

A. Matthew 28:19–20—The act of baptism should recognize each of the members of the Trinity (we draw our threefold action from this passage); baptism is the first part of the process of disciple-making.

B. Mark 1:4—Though referring to baptism by John the Baptist, this text emphasizes the connection between repentance and baptism (see Acts 2:38 also).

C. John 3:5—If this verse does allude to baptism (not all would agree that it does), it would tie baptism to entrance into the kingdom of God and associate baptism with the Spirit as well.

D. Acts 2:38–39—This text has been important for the Brethren. It links baptism with repentance, belief in Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. (My purpose here is not to discuss the nature of the link between baptism and these other elements; that would require another article.)

E. Romans 6:1–14—In baptism the believer is identified with Christ in His death and resurrection; baptism also serves as the foundation for Christian ethics.

F. 1 Corinthians 12:13—Baptism in, with, or by the Spirit (as we have seen, baptism and the Spirit are often connected with one another in the New Testament) incorporates us into one body; in this body all barriers that would divide or segregate God's people are broken down.

G. Ephesians 5:25–26—We are made holy by the word's action in association with baptism (washing with water).

H. Colossians 2:12—Baptism portrays that we are buried and raised with Christ through faith.

I. Titus 3:5—Salvation involves renewal and regeneration through the Spirit, which are signified in baptism.

**Curent Brethren Position on Baptism**

"The mode of receiving *new* believers into church membership is upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, repentance, *baptism by trine immersion*, and confirmation by the laying on of hands. Local churches at their option may receive believers who reaffirm their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, who have been previously baptized by *believers' immersion* and who evidence a personal faith and walk in Jesus Christ as Lord."

— From *A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church* (*emphasis added*)

J. 1 Peter 3:21—Baptism is the pledge of a good conscience toward God; this pledge or expression of faith saves us because of Christ's resurrection.

Based on these texts we can summarize the New Testament teaching about baptism's meaning as follows: (1) only those who have repented and believed in Jesus Christ should be baptized; (2) baptism is a symbol of our burial and resurrection with Christ; (3) baptism testifies to the activity of each member of the Trinity in the work of salvation; (4) God grants to the person expressing repentant faith in baptism His gifts of forgiveness, regeneration, and the Holy Spirit; (5) baptism by the Spirit incorporates believers into the body of Christ, the church.

If this is the meaning associated with the act of baptism in the New Testament, what is the meaning of baptism when we rebaptize people who have already been baptized as repentant believers? All of the biblical meaning of baptism has already been accomplished in their first baptism. No biblical meaning remains for a second believer baptism.

Usually Brethren argue for rebaptism on the grounds that it is either the initiatory rite into local church membership or an act of obedience and submission to the proper form of baptism and thus necessary for affiliation with The Brethren Church. Are these meanings consistent with the New Testament view of baptism?

No passage in the New Testament directly supports either of these interpretations. It may be argued that 1 Corinthians 12:13 suggests that baptism incorporates a person into the church. But Paul indicates that this baptism by the Spirit incorporates *all* into Christ's one body; it destroys barriers between believers. Clearly the emphasis is on the unity created among believers because all have been baptized by the same Spirit.

Two points arise from this passage. First, though Paul's letter was written to the Corinthian church, the implication of Paul's argument is that baptism with the Spirit binds believers together with all other believers; every Christian is part of the *universal* church. Second, given Paul's insistence that this baptism destroys barriers among believers, it is ironic that we would erect a barrier in Christ's body because someone was not baptized by the proper form.

Likewise, John 3:5 may suggest that baptism is a door or entrance; but it provides entrance to the kingdom of God not the local church. As Jesus goes on to say in John 3:15–16, belief in Him is what God desires of us.

There is also a sense in which baptism is an act of obedience and submission. Invariably, however, the New Testament views it as an act of obedience in which one submits to Christ in repentance, faith, and discipleship; it is never viewed as an act of submission necessary to meet the requirements for local church membership or affiliation with a denomination.

To ask people who already have been baptized as repentant believers to be rebaptized makes baptism into something other than what the New Testament says it is. In every case the New Testament sees baptism as the dividing line between being a non-Christian

and a Christian, between being a non-believer and a believer in Jesus Christ, between being outside of the blessings of the kingdom and being the recipient of God's gracious gifts. We lessen the significance of baptism if we change the New Testament meaning of the act to fit our practice of rebaptism.

### The distinction between principles and forms

The second issue raised by our present practice relates to the distinction between principles and forms. Principles are the essential biblical truths that must be believed regardless of culture. Forms are the outward expressions of these principles which tend to vary from culture to culture (types of music, styles of worship, church architecture, etc.).

Principles related to baptism are the New Testament teachings about the meaning of baptism we noted above. Forms find their significance as they convey the meaning of these principles. For this reason, I believe that trine immersion is the most appropriate form of baptism because it conveys most completely the meaning of baptism set forth in the New Testament.

If, however, someone has been baptized in a way that is consistent with the New Testament *significance* of baptism, we should recognize that person's baptism regardless of *form*. We need to ask what is more crucial to God, recognizing an "improper" form when the principle of baptism has been fulfilled, or asking a person to observe the "proper" form but thereby denying the New Testament principle.

Principles must always take precedence over forms. If they do not, we risk the dangers of ritualism, legalism, and bad theology. It borders on sacramentalism to ascribe power to a particular form of baptism and then reject the validity of a baptism in which a person has truly confessed Jesus as saving Lord.

There are some who would argue that the form or mode of immersion is ordained by the New Testament because that is the literal meaning of the word "baptize." It is true that baptism does mean to immerse. But we also need to ask whether the early church recognized other forms of baptism, even though immersion was always the preference. Of special significance is the *Didache*, a Christian church manual from the late first or early second century. It reflects the thinking of the church in the closing decades of the first century. In the instructions for baptism, this manual states:

> . . . baptize as follows: after you have reviewed all these things, baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in running water. But if you have no running water, then baptize in some other water; and if you are not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm. But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times "in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit."

Though immersion is clearly preferred, the *Didache* still recognizes the validity of baptism by pouring. This document, which purports to be the teaching of the twelve apostles, indicates that the early church was, under certain circumstances, flexible enough to accept other forms of baptism as valid.

Clearly, in the New Testament the emphasis is on the meaning of baptism (the principle), not on the form. We have no detailed instruction anywhere in the New Testament about how to administer baptism (the *Didache* is the earliest Christian document to do this).

Our denomination's present position on baptism forces us to say, however, that the form of threefold immersion is more important than what the New Testament indicates baptism represents (the principle). If we are to be true to the emphasis of Scripture, we need to recognize as valid the baptism, regardless of form, of anyone who has been baptized upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

### A historical issue

The third issue raised by our present practice is an ironic historical situation. As Brethren, we derived the vast majority of our faith and practice from the Mennonites. Yet they are the only group among Believers' Churches (denominations which baptize *only* those who have professed belief in Christ) whose people we require to be rebaptized. Ironically, we would receive people who were Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostals without rebaptism, but not Mennonites. We need to be consistent in our treatment of those in our Believers' Church tradition.

This may not be as compelling an argument as the previous points, but it is here that my own issue of conscience arose when I had to rebaptize a devout Mennonite couple at Smoky Row Brethren Church who had been baptized as believers by pouring. Such an act of rebaptism raises a significant issue. What are we saying about The Brethren Church when we openly welcome people with whom we share little doctrinally, and force those with whom we most agree to perform an act whose significance we cannot defend from Scripture? We must be saying that doctrine is less important to us than proper form. This is again the dilemma we face when we place forms above principles.

### Where the true divide is

The real divide for us as Brethren is between believer baptism and infant baptism, not immersion baptism and other forms. We define ourselves as a Believers' Church, as one that affirms that baptism is only for those who have confessed faith in Jesus Christ. Our baptismal practice should reflect this. To accept people into church membership who have been baptized by other forms of believer baptism is not another slide on the slippery slope to oblivion. It is the one and only continental divide that can be justified by Scripture. Indeed, anything short of this is a slippery position because it forces us to try to stand firm on ground that is biblically unsound.

Historically, the Brethren have been willing to allow Scripture to have the final word on all issues that confront us. I would ask all Brethren to do their biblical homework and study what Scripture says baptism means. Together let us seek the mind of Christ on this question. [⇧]

# Prayer: From Theory Into Practice

By Carolyn Cooksey

The final article in a series of four on Acts 2:42, the 1995 General Conference theme verse.

BEING DEVOTED to something seems to be a natural human activity. In our culture, which stresses independence and self-reliance, it is difficult to be devoted. Yet all of us at one time or another have given our devotion to someone or something, be it a mate, children, friends, work, football, or music. The degree of devotion ranges from slight or halfhearted at one extreme to deep or wholehearted dedication at the other.

## Examples of dedication

As I write this, it is Super Bowl Sunday. People devoted to football have looked forward to this day for a year or more. Of course, those most devoted to the game are on the field. They not only understand the theory of football, but they also have practiced long and hard for this game. They are intensely focused, for they are well aware of the stakes involved. Each team member is giving all he has in order to perform well. Devotion to football is a national pastime in America today.

I am devoted to music. Last night, much to my delight, the local symphony orchestra performed works by Mendelssohn and Brahms. Before the performance, the conductor introduced the audience to the composers—their lives and times—and to the stories behind their music. His enthusiastic understanding of the composers and their music and his belief in the ability of the musicians in the orchestra, combined with their dedication and practice (both individually and collectively), resulted in an outstanding performance. Because the conductor and orchestra put theory into practice, the music communicated something to everyone in the audience. The effect of the shared experience was contagious! No one left the concert unaffected.

In the Book of Acts, Luke tells us that the early Christians were devoted to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship with one another, to remembering Christ together, and to prayer (Acts 2:42). As difficult as it is to do so, let us for a moment try to step back into the shoes of the believers in the early church. Acts is the continued story of what Luke began in his Gospel. But in Acts, Luke no longer focuses on the earthly life of Jesus; rather, he gives us an inside glimpse of the life and work of the young church, its struggles and activities, as it learns to live and pray. Acts is permeated with prayer.

## Christian revolutionaries

Outwardly, these early Christians appeared to be very much like other ordinary people who raised families, worked, participated in community life, paid taxes, and lived as law-abiding and peaceful citizens of the Roman Empire. But in reality they were revolutionaries! They, unlike their non-Christian neighbors, were realizing the radical changes resulting from life in the Spirit.

These reborn believers were living in a new dimension. Each of them had experienced repentance, baptism, forgiveness, and the transforming presence and power of the Spirit. And love united them with one another. Transforming love was no longer an ideal; it was a reality. Life together in the Spirit created unity in the midst of their confusing political, social, and religious upheaval.

This early church gathered regularly for common study. As they listened to the eyewitness accounts of the life of Jesus that were remembered and retold by the apostles, their hearts and minds stirred with devotion.

## Uncommon devotion

Uncommon devotion led to common meals shared together. They cared for the physical needs of one another as they shared their food, their possessions, and their lives.

Uncommon devotion to breaking of bread—remembering and reenacting the meaning of Christ's life and death—provided for the needs of their souls and bound them together as the family of God, the body of believers Paul later describes.

Uncommon devotion to prayer undergirded it all. During the week, they prayed by themselves, perhaps working and praying at the same time, meditating on the Psalms or on other prayers. Theory became practice as they studied, worshiped, and prayed together. The small, struggling group of original followers grew to 120, then to a congregation of more than three thousand. Their love was contagious! People were drawn to them, and the church grew rapidly in a very short time.

## What is prayer?

What is prayer? The word itself originally meant to "ask for." Each of us would define prayer differently, and each definition would reflect our thinking, our practice, and our experience. For me, prayer is a constant awareness of God and a response to God's actions in my

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***"Devotion to prayer sounds strange to modern ears, even to Christians. We can understand devotion to people, to work, to sports, or to entertainment. But devotion to prayer?"***

life. Prayer begins with God. The human side of prayer is listening and seeking to hear and to respond to God's word.

Prayer, like salvation, is not a totally human endeavor. Scripture reveals time and time again that our God is a seeking God. Just as God sent His Son to seek and to save, so God initiates a loving relationship with each of us. Prayer is our response to God's steadfast love. It is an expression of our desire to welcome God into our lives and into the depths of our being. Prayer changes everything; it is the *radical* transforming power of God in our lives and in the world.

## What happens when we pray?

What happens when we pray? As we grow in love and prayer, our relationship with God, with others, and with ourselves is profoundly affected.

When we pray, we experience God's love and abiding presence; we realize that God wants to be involved in our existence. We get to know God better and to love Him more. Prayer makes us more sensitive to God's ways, to the life and work of Jesus Christ, and to the empowering of the Spirit, who is working within us revitalizing our spirits.

How amazing it is to realize that God desires to know us! God listens, speaks, and enables us to know His presence and peace in the midst of all of life's circumstances. Through prayer we learn to think as God would have us think, love as God would have us love, and live as God would have us live.

Prayer affects our relationships with others. Through prayer, we get to know others better and to love them more. We see them in a different light—as God sees them. Praying with others and for others connects us with others. We become actively involved in the lives of others. To pray is to love.

When we pray for others we are embracing them as we hold them up to God's loving presence. We cannot help but feel love and concern for those for whom we pray. Prayer connects us with the body of believers, locally and worldwide. Like the early believers, we find unity in prayer.

Prayer also affects our relationship with ourselves. Through prayer, we get to know ourselves better and to love ourselves more. Prayer increases our self-identity by helping us know more clearly who we are and what God requires of us—thus enabling us actually to become who and what we are intended to be. Our prayers form and shape our thoughts and actions. Inwardly we are growing in likeness to Christ, in love, in obedience to God, and in our sensitivity to the work of the Spirit in and around us. Outwardly we are doing what God directs, helping to establish the kingdom of God and witnessing to others of the God who dwells within us.

## What must we learn?

What must we Christians today learn from the devoted practices of the Christians in the early church? Luke says that they were devoted, but this was not a blind devotion. Rather, their eyes, ears, hearts, and minds were open in uncommon devotion to God's truth, to fellowship with each other, to remembering and celebrating Christ's work of redemption, and to prayer.

Devotion to prayer sounds strange to modern ears, even to Christians. We can understand devotion to people, to work, to sports, or to entertainment. But devotion to prayer? It makes us nervous. It is time for us to take a close look at our practice of prayer. Many of us are undisciplined people who do not pray. Most of us find it much easier to talk about God than to talk to God.

Our excuses for not praying take precedence over our practice of prayer. Our hurried, disorganized, busy lives are not conducive to devoted praying. We would rather read books about prayer or listen to sermons or keep so busy that we don't have time to think about or talk with the God who made us, knows us, and loves us. Many conscientious church-goers have not learned how to pray and are not praying. The practice of prayer is in crisis in many churches and in our world.

## What about us?

Is lack of prayer a problem for us and for our churches? During the last few years leaders of The Brethren Church have emphasized prayer and have called us to pray. But what have been the results? Have we become radical revolutionaries? Are we infectious? Are people drawn to us? Is transforming love a reality among us? Is our denomination growing?

According to a Gallup poll, nine out of ten Americans pray at least occasionally. What would happen if one out of ten were *devoted* to prayer? Every congregation has at least one "pray-er" whom others seek out in time of need. These people seldom get public recognition, but their lives have such depth and their prayers are so authentic that we are blessed and inspired by their example. There should be more of them than these few.

By devotion, we move from theory to practice. The Forty-Niners and the Chargers put their theories of football into practice. The symphony conductor and musicians used their theoretical knowledge of music to perform and communicate. Are we practicing what we know and believe?

How do we get prayer from theory into practice? *By praying!* Be a radical Christian devoted to prayer. We

*(continued on page 11)*



**Understanding the Bible**

# Revelation and the Bible

**By Brenda B. Colijn**

HOW do we know God? How can we, as finite human beings, know anything about One who is infinite? How can we physical creatures, grounded in time and space, know One who is Spirit and inhabits eternity? Left to our own resources, we wouldn't get very far. But instead of leaving us on our own, God has taken the initiative and has chosen to communicate with us. This self-communication by God is called revelation. Some aspects of it are quite general, while others are very specific.

## General Revelation

We can know something about God by studying the natural world. The psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Ps. 19:1*). The creation tells us of God's "eternal power and divine nature" (Rom. 1:20). The order and beauty of the creation point to the existence of a powerful and divine Creator. God's providential care, shown in His regular provision of rain and crops, tells us something of His kindness (Acts 14:17). We can also learn something about God from human nature, because we are made in the image of God and have traces of God's moral law in our conscience (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 2:14–15).

But the knowledge of God we get from creation and human nature is only partial. We understand that there is a God who made the world and who has some qualities in common with us. But this tells us little about God's character, and nothing at all about God's will for us or for the world.

Our knowledge of God from creation is also unreliable, because both nature and human beings are fallen (Rom. 8:20–23). Their original reflection of God has been distorted by sin. Nevertheless, creation gives us enough information about a Creator that when we refuse to acknowledge that Creator, we are "without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

## Specific Revelation

God has also communicated with human beings more directly. During the Old Testament period, God communicated through words and visions and through special experiences of His presence. God revealed His name to Moses during the encounter at the burning bush (Ex. 3:4–15). He gave the law to the people of Israel (Ex. 20:1; Ps. 147:19). He called and commissioned the prophets (Is. 6:1–13; Jer. 1:4–10) and then revealed His will to them so they could proclaim it to the people (Amos 3:7). Sometimes God's message came to the prophets through words and sometimes through visions (Hab. 2:2; Amos 7:1–9).

God's revelation also came through events in history, such as the Exodus, the conquest of the promised land, and both the judgment and the restoration of Israel (Ex. 20:2; Josh. 24:2–14; Ezek. 6:1–10; Is. 60:15–16). Through these actions, God revealed His holy love for His people and His character as redeemer:

> Sing to the LORD a new song,
> for he has done marvelous things;
> his right hand and his holy arm
> have worked salvation for him.
> The LORD has made his salvation known
> and revealed his righteousness to the nations. Ps. 98:1–2

But God was most fully revealed in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, who is God, was made flesh (John 1:1, 14). Jesus revealed God's character and will in a way never before possible: "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18). Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" in whom "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Col. 1:15; 2:9). He revealed God through His person (John 14:9–10), through His deeds (John 5:36; 14:11), and through His words (John 6:68; 17:8). So decisive and exclusive is this revelation in Christ that people cannot truly know God unless Jesus reveals God to them (Luke 10:22).

## Revelation and Scripture

God's revelation through word, deed, and incarnation is recorded for us in Scripture. For example, Moses wrote down God's law (Ex. 24:4), and the prophets or their

*Quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version*.

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*Dr. Colijn, a member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church in Worthington, Ohio, is an adjunct professor at Ashland Theological Seminary. She chairs The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

**Correspondence Welcomed**

The members of the General Conference Executive Council's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication invite readers to suggest topics or Bible passages to discuss in future articles in this column. Send questions, comments, or suggestions to the committee in care of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

***"In a day when we hear many claims of revelations about God from cults, New Age groups, and world religions, we can test all of these claims by the standard of God's perfect revelation in Jesus Christ as it is recorded in Scripture."***

disciples wrote down God's messages to preserve them (Is. 30:8; Jer. 30:1–2; 36:4). The New Testament writers researched, recorded eyewitness testimony, and testified personally to God's supreme revelation in Christ (Luke 1:1–4; John 21:24; Gal. 1:12; 1 John 1:1–3). They tell us that they did not record all of God's revelation through Christ (John 20:30; 21:25). But they recorded all that we need to make us "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15; see also John 20:31).

Because of its critical role in presenting God's revelation to us, the Bible is our only reliable source for knowing God and understanding His will. As the Holy Spirit convicts us of its truth and guides us in understanding it, the Bible establishes the framework within which all revelation must be understood (John 15:26; 16:13–14; 1 Cor. 2:12–16). No other genuine source of information about God will contradict what Scripture affirms.

## Qualities of Biblical Revelation

God's revelation in Scripture has four important qualities. First, it is historical. It tells us of God's acts in history to redeem a people for His own glory. It thus involves historical events which cannot be denied without destroying the basis of our faith (1 Cor. 15:13–18).

Second, revelation is propositional—that is, it involves truths to be believed (John 17:17). In order to receive the salvation God has accomplished for us, we must believe certain things about God and about Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9–10; Heb. 11:6).

Third, revelation is personal. It reveals not just information but a Person, and its object is to bring us into personal relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ (John 1:18; 17:3).

Fourth, revelation is progressive. It develops through the Old Testament and comes to a climax in Jesus Christ: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe" (Heb. 1:1–2; see also Col. 1:25–27).

## Conclusions

What does this idea of revelation mean for us as believers? It means that we have a reliable source of information about God in the Bible. Whenever we have questions about God, Scripture can be our trustworthy guide. Furthermore, in a day when we hear many claims of revelations about God from cults, New Age groups, and world religions, we can test all of these claims by the standard of God's perfect revelation in Jesus Christ as it is recorded in Scripture.

If we sometimes feel that God is silent, we can remember that He spoke the decisive word to us in Jesus Christ. In the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus—all accomplished for us—God said everything that ever needs to be said. God has revealed to us everything we need to know for salvation and growth in Christlikeness. God's revelation may not answer all our questions, but it gives us all that we really need. We can know and love God because He knew and loved us first (1 John 4:7–10, 19; John 3:16).

Our understanding of God's revelation should lead us to thanksgiving and worship, as we praise the great and holy God who loved us so much that He sent us His Son:

> Great and marvelous are your deeds,
> Lord God Almighty.
> Just and true are your ways,
> King of the ages.
> Who will not fear you, O Lord,
> and bring glory to your name?
> For you alone are holy.
> All nations will come
> and worship before you,
> for your righteous acts have been
> revealed. Rev. 15:3b-4 [⇧]

**Prayer: Theory to Practice**

*(continued from page 9)*

learn to pray by praying. Start where you are; ask God to give you a heart for prayer; and pray as God leads. God honors prayers that are full of faith as well as our doubt-filled cries of fear and frustration. Prayer can be simple—"Please," "Sorry," "Thank You," "Help, Lord!" or "I love You!"—or more profound. Prayer can be shouted or silent; with laughter or tears; a cry from the heart in the midst of crisis or a glow from the soul while abiding in His presence and peace.

Each of us can find our own way of praying; each of us can discover forms of prayer that are unique to our personalities and circumstances. Come as you are to God and *pray*. Even if you don't feel like it, *pray*. If you are tired, *pray*. If you don't know what your are doing, *pray*. Busy? *Pray*. Angry? *Pray*. Happy? *Pray*. Hurting? *Pray*. Find your own unique way to pray and use it. Let prayer bring out the best in you.

Prayer affects everything we are and do. It leads us into the world to do ministry. If we are devoted to prayer, our lives will reflect it. Be a learner in the life of prayer. Please join in this lifelong spiritual quest. Pray with total involvement, total abandonment. Pray believing that God is present, for He is. Pray knowing your prayers are heard and answered, for they are. Pray boldly, persistently, with your whole being. This kind of prayer—offered with heart, soul, mind, strength, and in the Spirit—is radical, revolutionary. *Be devoted to prayer!* [⇧]

*Brethren World Relief*

# By Your Gifts, You Are There

**World Relief Corporation (WRC) of the National Association of Evangelicals is at work in many areas of the world doing relief and development work. By your gifts to Brethren World Relief, you are there too, helping to alleviate human suffering in the name of Christ.**

## Nicaragua

### With Virgin Forest Gone, Farmers Turn to the Soil

"IT WAS definitely different here when I first came," remembers Mariano Benavides, who has lived in the frontier community of Los Chiles in Nicaragua's southern Rio San Juan province for 25 years. "There was quite a bit of forest. The soil was fertile. There was a lot more rain, and it was cooler."

Mariano takes a break from digging ditches. For more than a year he has worked for World Relief as an agricultural promoter, organizing groups of farmers to learn new farming methods that slowly replenish unproductive soil so additional forested land doesn't have to be cleared. Mariano currently works with about 88 farmers in six groups.

"I know all the deforestation and land burning has contributed to the weather changes. I used to get 31–36 bushels of beans per acre each harvest, but now I just get 8–10 in some areas."

At the request of rural churches, World Relief designed a five-year program to change community farming practices to halt the destruction of the rain forest, reestablish tree cover, and increase the farmer's crop yields and marketing skills.

Church leaders also saw an opportunity for evangelical churches to teach their people how to help others in practical ways. As a result, many of the agricultural promoters are Christians who, in the words of Freddy Zamoran, director of the social development arm of Central America Mission (CAM) in Nicaragua, feel "the social problems of our people in our own flesh."

While the main objective of promoters is not to evangelize, Zamoran reports that people are coming to Christ. "This, for me," he says, "is one of the strongest points of our program."

In Nueva Guinea and Rio San Juan, agricultural promoters are teaching 2,000 farmers to prevent soil erosion by digging ditches and planting harvestable bushes that prevent soil nutrients from washing away.

The farmers whom promoters reach would not necessarily identify destruction of the rain forest as an urgent issue, but they do know they are becoming even poorer through present farming practices. When land is cleared by burning, farmers get a suitable harvest, but at the expense of taking nutrients from the soil. So by the third year, the land's productivity is significantly reduced and farmers, feeling pressure to feed their families, must often move to new land.

At the current rate of deforestation, the rain forest in Nicaragua will be gone by the year 2020. Deforestation and the resulting inability of the land to retain water leads to increasing cycles of flooding, drought, and desertification, as is happening in some parts of Honduras and El Salvador.

Today Mariano shows farmers how to dig catchments along the land's contours to prevent torrential rains from washing away precious top soil. Non-traditional crops like coconut palms, pineapple, or cacao trees will be planted to



World Relief Corporation Photo

*Digging absorption ditches to reduce runoff of water, in Rio San Juan, Nicaragua.*

## Mozambique

Because of World Relief's long commitment to Mozambique and its outstanding track record of providing help to the poor, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees asked World Relief to deliver more than $1.1 million in seed packs for struggling farmers. These seed packs, delivered in December, are benefiting more than 275,000 people at a cost of just $5.34 each. [✝]

stabilize the soil. Velvet bean, new to most farmers, will be planted and its growth turned over into the soil to replenish lost nutrients. Traditional crops of rice, bean, and corn will then be planted between the ditches.

Jenoa Castellon Laguna is a Rio San Juan farmer who remembers forest so thick that "people used to get lost trying to come here." Now, forest is nowhere to be seen from Jenoa's home. He has planted lemongrass, coconut palms, and pineapple along the higher side of the ditches he dug. Lemongrass also acts as a natural insecticide. The pineapple and coconut can be used as cash crops or as food to feed his family.

Farmers like Jenoa know their labor is also a future investment. "I know I won't be around to enjoy the coconuts," the 93-year-old farmer says. "But maybe my grandkids will enjoy them. I'm trying to set a good example for them, so they'll want to work hard too." [⇧]

### Changing Lives in Croatia

For many years, Romana—the librarian of an elementary school in Croatia—described herself as an atheist, then as an agnostic. Her feelings toward God changed recently, however, as the result of a ministry sponsored by World Relief and a local Baptist church.

World Relief provided funds so the school could provide balanced meals to school children each day. When Romana saw that the local Baptist church was World Relief's partner, she said, "Now I am seeing the church in action; it is now becoming part of my life in a very practical sense." She has turned her life over to Christ, and a local pastor, Toma Magda, reports that she is considering the serious matter of baptism.

Pastor Magda says such ministries are valuable. "The city and education officials are taking note [that] we do not just care for our own small minority, but we have the care of the whole community in our hearts. And that to us is the gospel in its fullness!" [⇧]



Photo by Jon Warren

## World Relief Continues Aid to Rwanda

World Relief, one of the first agencies to become involved in relief work to Rwandans following last year's violence and mass exodus of refugees from that country, continues to provide critically needed aid to Rwandan refugees.

Partnering with the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda, World Relief is providing food for 306 orphans in Kibogora until June 30, when the Free Methodist Church plans to assume responsibility.

World Relief is restoring Kibogora Hospital and five clinics that were looted and reestablishing the services of vaccinations, prenatal care, and care to children under five—treating potentially fatal illnesses like diarrhea. The hospital and clinics are operated by the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda.

Across the border, in Bukavu, Zaire, World Relief continues to feed 1,000 Rwandan refugees who fled there last July. The food distribution is being done in cooperation with World Relief Canada and the Free Methodist Church.

World Relief leaders are also calling for focused prayer for peace in Rwanda and in the neighboring country of Burundi. Rwanda remains a wounded nation in the aftermath of the brutal violence that erupted last year. Meanwhile, Burundi, with the same ethnic mix as Rwanda, is suffering escalating violence. [⇧]

### Becoming Partners in Malawi

"We don't want to be donors, but partners," reports Laura van Vuuren, World Relief's country Director in Malawi (SE Africa). World Relief's partnership with local churches goes beyond providing such things as food and clothing; World Relief also helps churches begin to solve their problems on their own.

Churches are teaching people in their communities to improve their lives by planting drought-resistant crops, conserving water and saving for the future. "The church is the catalyst for change at the community level," says van Vuuren. "We want to equip them with skills that change people's attitude to start helping themselves."

Churches are learning that helping others opens many doors to evangelism. "The church is the answer to their long-term problems, because the only hope for Africa is if the people reach out in love to one another," said van Vuuren. [⇧]

# Our Gifts to World Relief Corporation *Are* Appreciated!

*At the end of each month, offerings for World Relief that have been received at the National Office from Brethren churches during that month are forwarded on to World Relief Corporation to be used in WRC's ongoing relief and development work. These gifts are always acknowledged with a note of appreciation from Dr. Arthur Gay, president of World Relief Corporation. Here is one such note, which was received during the past year.*

Dear Brethren,

Thank you for your generous gift of $2,647.64 to World Relief. Your gift makes it possible for Christians around the world to reach out to their neighbors with physical help in times of suffering—and [with] hope in Christ for eternal life and joy.

I am often asked, "How do you keep from being overwhelmed when you see all the suffering in the world?" That's a fair question; every day in the newspapers and on TV, we see people in need . . . in the former Yugoslavia, in the African nations of Burundi and Rwanda . . . and yes, even in the United States.

Matthew gives us this picture of Jesus: "When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless . . . ." *The Living Bible* paraphrases that verse as: "And what pity He felt for the crowds that came, because their problems were so great and they didn't know what to do or where to go for help" (9:36). Christ was concerned, but never overwhelmed . . . I desire to be like Jesus.

Because you, too, are moved with compassion, people in 28 countries—including our own nation—can turn to their local evangelical church for help. World Relief is equipping their Christian neighbors to respond with compassion and practical solutions to the poverty and suffering that breaks down even the strongest family.

Because of your gift to World Relief, a life may be eternally changed. Please pray with me that God will bless this ministry and use it for His honor and glory. God bless you!

With gratitude,
Art Gay
President



*At right, Dr. Arthur Gay with a Rwanda child, in a photo taken earlier this year.*



*The World Relief Open Hands Award was presented to Brethren Church representative Ronald W. Waters (c.) on March 6 in Louisville, Ky., at the annual convention of the National Association of Evangelicals. The award was presented to The Brethren Church by Dr. John H. White (l.), chairman of the World Relief board, and Dr. Art Gay, president of World Relief, in recognition of the funds the denomination contributed to World Relief in the past year to alleviate human suffering in the name of Christ around the world.*

# World Relief Awareness and Fund-Raising Ideas

Compiled by Timothy Garner

DURING the World Relief luncheon at the 1994 General Conference, those who attended were asked to share ways their churches have used to raise awareness of World Relief ministries as well as ways they have raised funds for those ministries. Following is a compilation of their responses.

Many commented on the value of materials sent out by World Relief Corporation (WRC) of the National Association of Evangelicals. World Relief Corporation provides posters and bulletin inserts and offers videos on its work in various countries. The WRC publications *Touching* and *Partnership Update* also communicate needs and how World Relief is helping to meet those needs. Several people noted using offering bags, banks, lunch buckets, or Love Loaves (a World Vision item) for a World Relief emphasis over a four- to six-week period in April.

Including World Relief needs in the sermon or morning prayer and using available Sunday school curriculum from WRC proved helpful to some.

Money for World Relief has been raised through garage sales, baked-goods sales, a chili supper, a silent auction of homemade goodies and craft items, a walk-a-thon, a rock-a-thon, and a CROP-walk with part of the money designated for WRC. Two unusual ideas included using seed money to fix a meal and then receiving a special offering from those who ate the meal; and giving people $5 to $10 and asking them to use it in such a way as to make a profit for World Relief (like the Parable of the Talents).

Special-offering ideas included children's Sunday school or VBS offerings for World Relief; giving a tithe of a tithe to World Relief; receiving a "fifth Sunday" offering for World Relief; or having a container at home and/or at church in which to throw loose change, with the money going to World Relief.

Other ideas were putting World Relief in the church budget, and/or taking a monthly offering for World Relief as a reminder of the ongoing need and two crisis offerings a year to meet the crisis nature of World Relief ministry.

**Which of these ideas can your church use?** [⇧]

*Rev. Garner, pastor of the Elkhart, Ind., First Brethren Church, emceed the 1994 World Relief luncheon.*

### Food for the Soul Also Inequitably Distributed

Each year the gospel is presented some 95 times per every person on earth. This seems an incredible evangelistic feat until one realizes that the overwhelming majority of these offers are made in the Christian world. The "distribution . . . is as bad as the world distribution of food, water, medicine, shelter, and other human rights," according to David B. Barrett, contributing editor for *International Bulletin of Missionary Research.*

## An Accounting of Our Stewardship

Brethren gave a total of $80,358 for World Relief in 1994. That's a 12 percent increase over the $71,828 given in 1993. But it was $8,119 less than was given in 1992.

Forty-nine churches gave more than the suggested Fair Share of $6 per "member,"* while 68 churches gave less than their Fair Share, with 21 of those giving nothing at all. The positive side of the last figure is that ten churches that gave nothing in 1993 did contribute in 1994, giving a total of $708.90. [⇧]

**Top Churches in Total Giving**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. St. James | $4,478 |
| 2. Winding Waters | 3,593 |
| 3. Smithville | 3,461 |
| 4. Jefferson | 3,202 |
| 5. Goshen | 2,965 |
| 6. Park Street | 2,888 |
| 7. South Bend | 2,875 |
| 8. Brighton Chapel | 2,856 |
| 9. New Lebanon | 2,813 |
| 10. Milledgeville | 2,731 |

*Actually $6 per Church Growth Index point. A congregation's Church Growth Index is calculated by adding its membership, average worship attendance, and average Sunday school attendance, then dividing by three.

**Top Churches in Percentage of Increase from 1993 to 1994***

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Sarasota | 3,098% |
| 2. Drushal | 1,567% |
| 3. Nappanee | 587% |
| 4. Mt. Olivet | 369% |
| 5. Mexico | 333% |

*Excluding those that gave nothing in 1993

**Top Churches in Fair Share Percentage**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Mt. Olivet | 638% |
| 2. St. Petersburg | 606% |
| 3. Stockton | 581% |
| 4. Sergeantsville | 570% |
| 5. South Bend | 470% |
| 6. Mexico | 433% |
| 7. Bethlehem | 381% |
| 8. Brighton Chapel | 342% |
| 9. Teegarden | 341% |
| 10. North Georgetown | 300% |

# UPDATE

## BRETHREN CHURCH NEWS



*Park Street's new Family Life Center. The small building at the left (attached to the Family Life Center) was formerly the parsonage but now houses the church offices. The building containing the sanctuary is behind the office building. The Christian education building (not visible) is behind the Family Life Center.*

## Ashland Park Street Church Dedicates New Family Life Center on March 26th

**Ashland, Ohio** — Members and friends of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church dedicated the church's new Family Life Center on Sunday afternoon, March 26.

The dedication program was part of a day of activities at the church facility that also included two morning worship services (total attendance 481); Sunday school; the congregation's first fellowship meal in the new Family Life Center (attendance approximately 340); a time for recreation and continued fellowship in the Family Life Center; and, in the evening, ministry meetings, youth and children's activities, and an inquirers class and an evangelism study.



*Park Street pastor Dr. Arden Gilmer (l.) expresses his appreciation to Moderator Jim Hess for his leadership and labor during the planning and building of the church's Family Life Center.*

Dr. Arden E. Gilmer, senior pastor of the congregation, was in charge of the dedication program. He made comments emphasizing the purpose of the new building ***(ministry)*** and expressing his appreciation to those who had made the building possible, noting particularly the leadership and labors of Jim Hess, the church's moderator (who received a standing ovation from the crowd).

Moderator Hess then reviewed the process of planning and constructing the building and led the congregation in expressing appreciation to the various committees and individuals who had worked to bring the project to completion. He noted especially the untiring efforts of Park Street member Tim Shultz, who served as the chair of the construction committee.

Dr. Charles Munson, a member and highly regarded elder of the Park Street congregation, presented dedicatory remarks. Then Rev. Ronald W. Waters, Director of Denomination Ministries, led the congregation in offering prayers of dedication for the building. The dedication program also included special music by Kingdom Kids, Reveille (a mixed vocal ensemble), and the church choir.

The new 92- by 120-foot, cement-block building features a stucco and brick exterior. Central to the building is a 65- by 79-foot multi-purpose room, which will serve as a fellowship hall, gymnasium, and auditorium for special programs, children's plays, and other large-group activities. The building also houses a spacious kitchen, a banquet room for smaller groups when the entire fellowship hall is not needed (which can also be divided and made into two classrooms), up to eight additional classrooms, restrooms, and storage areas. Total cost of the building is approximately $950,000.

The goal of the congregation is to have the building in use seven days a week for church activities, after-school activities for neighborhood children, outreach ministries, recreation, etc., all as a means of ministry to the congregation and to the community.

On Sunday, April 2, an afternoon open house in the Family Life Center was held for people of the community. And on Palm Sunday the congregation will hold its first Communion service in the new facility. This will be the first time in many years that the congregation will be able to meet together in one Communion service.

*— reported by Dick Winfield*

### Ordination of Milton Robinson Reaffirmed at Oak Hill Church

**Oak Hill, W. Va.** — Following approval by the Board of Spiritual Oversight of the Southeastern District, the former ordination of Rev. Milton Robinson as a Brethren elder was reaffirmed during a service on February 26 at the Oak Hill First Brethren Church.

Rev. Robinson served as pastor of the Oak Hill Church from 1953 to 1957 and later pastored the Manteca, Calif., (now Northgate) Brethren Church. But he was out of pastoral ministry in The Brethren Church for a number of years, during which he taught school and served in churches of other denominations. He spent those years in California.



*Rev. Milton Robinson*

A widower, he recently married Lois Hall, an Oak Hill native, and they returned to Oak Hill, where they are now active in the First Brethren Church.

At the service on February 26 during which his ordination was reaffirmed, he said that he is a Brethren because it is the only church he has been in where he has had the opportunity to obey every command given by Christ.

*— reported by R. Rogusky*

# Participants in Church Planting Summit Excited About Church Planting in The Brethren Church

**Ashland, Ohio** — A growing excitement about church planting in The Brethren Church was evident at the Church Planting Summit held Thursday, March 16, at Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland.

Attending the gathering were representatives from every district mission board in The Brethren Church; members of the New Church Development Commission; Rev. Russell Gordon, Director of U.S. Ministries and Church Growth for the national Missionary Board; and Rev. Ronald W. Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries.

The summit opened with devotions by Rev. Gordon followed by an introduction to the gathering by Dr. Dale Stoffer, chair of the New Church Development Commission. In his remarks, Dr. Stoffer emphasized that though participants in the summit came from the various far-flung districts of The Brethren Church, "We're in this together." He went on to note that there is a growing sense of working together in church planting in The Brethren Church, with districts sharing with one another both financial and human resources.

Dr. Stoffer went on to list seven crucial areas of need for church planting in The Brethren Church, as identified by the commission. They are (1) personnel (a national person just for church planting); (2) finances; (3) calling and training of church planters; (4) construction of buildings; (5) coordination of efforts and resources; (6) development of a philosophy of ministry for church planting; and (7) demographic work.

He noted with regret that many Brethren churches are caught up in self-preservation and have no climate for church extension. This is unfortunate since, as he also noted, growing churches are, for the most part, those that are looking beyond their own four walls.

## Present district projects

Next a representative from each district mission board shared what that district is now doing in church planting. Each district reported that it is either now planting a new church or churches or is in the process of making plans for church extension.

Current projects of particular note include STAKE (Saturation of the Target Area for Kingdom Extension) in Florida, which recently held an action planning retreat; the new Brethren Church of Medina, which began in November and is now running nearly 60 for Sunday morning worship; an increase in the number and size of "cells" (small groups) in Greenwood, Ind., and the start of Sunday meetings in a couple of locations; a new Bible study in Catalina, Ariz.; and plans for a church planting effort to begin in late summer in the Northern California District.

Following the viewing of a video, *The Power of Vision*, participants shared short-term and long-term visions for church planting in their districts. Some of the possibilities mentioned were:

## District visions

**Northern California**—a multi-church outreach to begin later this year, plus one or two Filipino works in the Stockton area.

**Southwest**—classes in Catalina and Benson, Ariz., and Hispanic outreaches in Tucson in the short term, plus a return to the Phoenix area in five to ten years.

**Midwest**—find a third tentmaker family and a pastor in order to begin the planned outreach in Denver, and a desire to begin a church in Wichita.

**Central**—do demographic work in towns in the Rockford, Ill., area, with the goal of planting one or two churches in five to ten years.

**Indiana**—by the year 2,000 to have trained 14 church planters and to have started 15 new Brethren Satellite Indigenous Congregations (S.I.C.) in the greater Indianapolis area; in the five years to follow that, continue to train leaders and birth new S.I.C.'s; build a large worship center in the Indianapolis area to host area-wide celebrations and outreach events; and target other urban centers in Indiana, other districts, and around the world.

**Ohio**—begin planting a church in the Columbus-Delaware area in three years in cooperation with Ashland Theological Seminary and the Smoky Row Brethren Church; begin another church in six years in cooperation with the seminary.

**Florida**—four phases of STAKE are projected: the current one in Orlando, a second one in Orlando beginning in August 1996, one in Tampa to begin in 1998, and one in the Sarasota-Venice (and south) area in the year 2000.

**Southeastern**—churches in this district are looking to start new churches in their own areas as an extension of Passing On the Promise. Possibilities mentioned were the southern part of Hagerstown, Md.; Westminster, Md.; and Washington, D.C.

**Pennsylvania**—Butler and Pittsburgh are being considered as possible areas in which to start new churches, with the possibility of an African-American work in Pittsburgh.

Following this vision-sharing, Rev. Ron Waters, Director of Brethren Ministries, talked about some principles related to the theory and practice of church planting. He noted three stages of church planting: (1) stagnation—the church is a well-oiled machine but nothing is happening; (2) shotgun—a lot of efforts are made but without focus and direction; (3) system—a wholistic and integrated plan made up of individual components. Rev. Waters said that our emphasis in church planting should not be on just starting individual congregations, but on developing "productive capacity" which can be used in producing churches in many different places ("franchising").

The summit continued with a discussion of what resources are needed and what are currently available. Some of the needs mentioned were for additional training; a change in attitude about outreach and church planting in churches; better communication about what we are doing and why; a "human resource center" of people who are willing, available, and have the skills to help in various ways in church planting (e.g., Sunday school teachers, builders, V.B.S. teachers, etc.).

The summit concluded with a discussion of the question, "Where do we go from here?" followed by an extended time of prayer. Participants agreed that a church-planting summit should be an annual event and that this year's gathering was a time of mutual encouragement. The summit concluded with participants indicating a growing conviction that God is going to do something great through The Brethren Church and a willingness to risk in order to be a part of what God is going to do.

*— reported by Dick Winfield*

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Our society requires 17 years of education before certifying a person to teach in public school. Medical doctors and psychologists must have 20 years of schooling before they practice on your children. And many states require teenagers to take a course in driver's education before they can be licensed to drive a car. *But to rear children from the cradle to their twenties, our society doesn't require one hour of formal training.*

*— Dr. Bruce Narramore in* ***Help! I'm a Parent*** *(Zondervan, 1995)*

# Ronald W. Waters Resigning as DBCM To Teach Evangelism at the Seminary

**Ashland, Ohio** — Ronald W. Waters has tendered his resignation as Director of Brethren Church Ministries, effective June 1, 1996, to become assistant professor of evangelism at Ashland Theological Seminary.

The resignation by Waters was part of a "Proposal for a Cooperative Effort in Evangelism Between Ashland Theological Seminary and The Brethren Church" presented by the seminary to the General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) at its March 17 meeting. Under the terms of the proposal, which was adopted by GCEC, beginning September 1, 1996, Waters will carry a three-quarter time teaching load in evangelism and church growth at the seminary and serve the denomination one-quarter time as staff in evangelism and church growth.

During the 1996–1997 year, the seminary will provide three-fourths of his salary and benefits, with the denomination providing the rest. In 1997–1998 and thereafter, the seminary will provide his entire salary and benefits but will still loan Waters back to the church for one-quarter of his time. The church will provide funding for his travel and also for materials related to denominational evangelism work.

Waters, who has served as Director of Brethren Church Ministries since July 1989, has been working part time since September 1993 while pursuing a Doctor of Missiology degree at Asbury Theological Seminary. He will resume full-time status June 1, 1995, and continue in full-time employment until June 1, 1996. From June 1 to August 31, 1996, he will be employed at one-quarter salary in the area of evangelism and church growth.



*Ronald W. Waters*

In his letter of resignation, Waters said that he was resigning with mixed emotions. "I am excited about the new challenge of teaching and of the possibility of continuing to work with Brethren congregations in evangelism and church growth. At the same time, I am sad to be leaving the leadership role GCEC called me to nearly six years ago.

"I have been humbled to be entrusted with this responsibility. As with any position, this one has had its share of joys and frustrations. But I have not regretted accepting the position and have clearly sensed God's validation of my call to it."

GCEC did not discuss the process for finding a successor for Waters in this meeting. The National Leadership Council (composed of the General Conference moderator, moderator-elect, past moderator, the Director of Brethren Church Ministries, and both the president and the Executive Director of the Missionary Board) will be meeting on April 5 to continue the ongoing discussion of possible reorganization in The Brethren Church at the denominational level. The resignation of Waters will very likely have an impact on this discussion.

### Other Actions of General Conference Executive Council at its March 17 Meeting

- Approved the granting of class charters to two new Brethren groups, the STAKE project in Orlando/Kissimmee, Fla.; and The Brethren Church of Medina, Ohio.
- Received the accountant's compilation and 1994 financial report. The national office ended 1994 with an operating surplus of $31,262 (only slightly less than the $32,402 in 1993). The report revealed a two percent increase in Fair Share Support for Brethren Church Ministries and a 12 percent increase for World Relief.
- Heard a report on possible Indiana sites for 1997 General Conference (Manchester College, St. Mary's College in South Bend, and Bethel College in Mishawaka were mentioned).
- Discussed plans for providing THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST to all Brethren households beginning in September 1995. A 12-page newsletter that would be direct-mailed to Brethren homes is envisioned.
- Agreed to study guidelines for the position of lay pastor, including requirements for the calling and commissioning of such pastors.
- Expressed concern about the problem of conflict between pastors and congregations and the lack of a procedure to intervene in such conflicts. A committee was appointed to prepare a proposal for studying this problem.

### Chair of Evangelism Funded At Ashland Theological Seminary

The hiring of Ronald Waters to serve as assistant professor of evangelism at Ashland Theological Seminary was made possible by the recent funding of a Chair in Evangelism at the seminary. This funding came from a Brethren couple, who, on December 31, 1994, made an initial gift of $300,000 worth of stock to the seminary for this Chair. The couple also made a commitment to provide an additional $200,000 in funding over the next few years.

## STAKE Church Planting Project Featured at Florida Conference

**Valrico, Fla.** — Rev. Kerry Scott, director of STAKE (Saturation of the Target Area for Kingdom Extension), the new church planting project in Florida, was the featured speaker at the 18th annual Florida District Conference, held Sunday, March 5, at the Bloomingdale Brethren Church.

In addition to Rev. Scott's message about the project, other members of the STAKE team introduced themselves and shared their spiritual journey since the beginning of the project last summer.

Eugene Robbins of Sarasota served as conference coordinator and conducted the conference business session. In addition to the customary reports and elections, the district took action to recognize STAKE as a district class and to request national class status for the group. This recommendation was then forwarded to the national Missionary Board and the General Conference Executive Council for action.

Paul Yoder, the new district coordinator, announced that the 1996 conference theme will be "Stand Firm Then" from Ephesians 6:14. Newly-elected officers are coordinator-elect David Stone; secretary Martha Stone; treasurer Sarah Garrett; Men's Representative Dale Lapish; Women's Representative Kathy Rosales; and Ministerial Representative Buck Garrett.

The conference also featured special music from district congregations. A total of 75 delegates and guests attended the gathering.

*— reported by Ronald W. Waters*

# Five West Alexandria Brethren Take Short-Term Mission Trip to Bolivia

**West Alexandria, Ohio** — Jim Gibbs, Jim and Diane Jones, and the Joneses' sons Craig and Vincent, all from the West Alexandria First Brethren Church, were part of a team of eleven people who spent two weeks in December in short-term mission work in Bolivia.

They served in Sucre, the cultural capital of Bolivia. This city of approximately 100,000 people is located about 9,000 feet above sea level. Quechua Indians make up the majority of the population, but many Spanish-speaking non-Quechuas also inhabit the city.




*Jim and Diane Jones and their sons, Craig and Vincent, and Jim Gibbs (r.) on their way to Bolivia.*

The team, which traveled to Bolivia under the auspices of United World Mission of North Carolina, expected to work at a training center for the Quechua Indians being built at a location about 3½ hours by jeep from Sucre. But it turned out that the land for the new building had not yet been purchased. So instead the team remained in Sucre and worked at the San Juanillo Bible Institute. There they scrapped and painted dormitory rooms and laid sidewalk. They found that because of the altitude, they could not work quickly, so they adopted a slow and steady pace.

The life expectancy of the Indians is about 45 years. So the Indians were surprised when they learned that one of the team members was almost 60 and two were in their 70s!

In addition to working, the team also had the opportunity to do some sightseeing. One weekend they visited a village market in Tarebuco. They made the trip to the village on the back of a cattle truck, sharing space with other travelers and many different kinds of merchandise. Tarebuco, a village of 400, swells to around 2,000 during the Saturday and Sunday market days.

Another trip, up one of the mountains to view the beauty of the surrounding countryside, resulted in a different kind of adventure. On the way up the mountain, the van in which they were traveling easily went through a small stream that ran across the road. But while they were on the mountain, rain widened the stream and swelled it to a depth above the knees.

When the van reached the stream, the men got out and the driver tried to cross with only himself and the women in the vehicle. But the van became stuck. The men, and eventually most of the women, pushed, but to no avail. It was threatening even more rain, and it appeared that soon the van might be caught in an even worse rush of water. So the group had a time of prayer. When they pushed again, they were able to move the van easily after just a couple of tries.

On their return trip to the U.S. they also encountrered problems. Their flight out of Bolivia left two hours late, making them late for their connecting flight in Miami and causing additional problems later. But despite this inconvenience, they arrived safely home after an interesting and rewarding experience in Bolivia.

On Sunday morning, February 26, Jim Gibbs and the members of the Jones family each received a plaque from the West Alexandria Church in recognition of their mission service.

*— excerpted from an article by West Alexandria member Audrey Gilbert published in the Eaton, Ohio, newspaper,* ***The Register Herald.***




By Rev. Dave West

SOME fifteen months ago a group of Brethren church leaders got together in a very unlikely location — Las Vegas, Nevada. Many different voices came together to seek what they had in common. What they found was a profound burden for the lost; a desire to plant new churches for God's kingdom; a realistic awareness of the resources available; and an unflappable faith in God.

From that meeting came the concept of and a desire for a gathering of the Brethren in the West. The Great Western Roundup was born. Since that meeting, a voice calling for this meeting has been growing steadily louder.

This will not be a conference. It will be a gathering in which we celebrate who we are in worship; in which we will be challenged by God's word to commitment; in which we will discover consensus of purpose in small groups; in which we will have some joyous fun; and in which we will eat some great food. (Hey, we're Brethren!) One of the primary goals for this gathering will be to build bridges of communication, encouragement, and support. Your involvement is necessary to help erect those bridges.

What started out as a faint call has gained in volume. The event is now upon us. On June 23–25, 1995, Brethren from around the country will be gathering at the beautiful Longs Peak Inn in Estes Park, Colorado, for the very first Great Western Brethren Roundup. February 15 marked the opening of registration for this historic event. This will be a great opportunity for a family vacation, so bring the kids. The number and ages of children and youth attending will dictate the activities that are planned for them. A nursery will be available as needed.

You will not want to miss this first ever Western Roundup. Come and enjoy the wonder and beauty of the Rocky Mountains. Witness the presence of the Lord as He inhabits the praises of His people. Be a part of the vision to advance the Kingdom of God in the West. Help set the stage for a wider, fuller, more active Brethren witness to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reservation information may be obtained by writing to Cathy Britton, 710 N. Woodlawn Blvd., Derby KS 67037

Be a part of the best in the West! [✞]

# Northern California District Adopts Bold Plan for Planting New Churches

**Manteca, Calif.** — The Northern California District adopted a bold church planting plan at its annual conference held February 24–26 at the Northgate Community Brethren Church.

The plan, which was presented by the district executive committee and the district mission board, calls for employment of an experienced church planter to serve as a district church planting coordinator. The goal is to employ this coordinator soon so that a new church may begin later in the fall. The coordinator would also explore and facilitate the starting of other new churches through the Stockton and Northgate congregations, using bi-vocational pastors where possible.

The plan was developed in consultation with Rev. Russell Gordon, Director of Home Missions for the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. The national and district mission boards have developed a creative financing plan that will include loans for the project from the national board to the district. The loans will be repaid with proceeds from the sale of the building of the Lathrop Brethren Church, a congregation which dispanded during the past year.

"It is exciting to see the determination and commitment of the California Brethren to the task of expanding the Kingdom of God through church planting," said Gordon. "The plan they adopted is a step of faith. I am thrilled that the national Missionary Board can be involved with them in taking that step."

Though not specified in the plan adopted by the conference, district members envision starting from six to twenty new churches in California by the end of this decade.

Moderator Marshall Lehr led the conference during the past year. Other business conducted included routine reports and elections. Twenty-six ministerial and lay delegates and alternates were seated for the business session.

Newly-elected officers for 1995–96 are moderator Alan Schmiedt, vice moderator Marshall Lehr, secretary Cheryl Schmiedt, treasurer Carolyn Bennett, and members-at-large Hope Rigunan and Audio Urbano.

Theme of the conference was "The Devoted Church . . . Grows" based on Acts 2:42–74. Denominational leaders spoke on three aspects of the theme each evening—worship and fellowship, servant leadership, and evangelism and service.

The 1996 conference will be held February 23–25 at the Stockton church.

*— reported by Ronald W. Waters*

## Bonnie Munson Honored For Community Service

**St. Petersburg, Fla.** — Bonnie Munson, a member of the St. Petersburg Brethren Church and the Brethren House Ministries team of that church, was honored February 23 by the Tampa Bay chapter of The National Conference of Christians and Jews for her community service.

Ms. Munson was one of eight people from the Tampa Bay area (four from greater St. Petersburg, four from Tampa) who were presented the Mayors' Brotherhood/Sisterhood Award. The awards were made at a $25-a-plate luncheon held at the St. Petersburg Hilton Hotel. Each honoree received a plaque and had her/his picture taken with the mayors of St. Petersburg and Tampa.

Ms. Munson was recognized for leading a life of volunteer community service. For 23 years she has worked at Brethren House Ministries and for the past seven years she has served as a volunteer at Bayfront Medical Center. She has succeeded in raising community awareness about accessibility issues, with her efforts culminating in accessibility improvements to Bayfront's rehabilitation wing, cafeteria, and newly renovated interfaith chapel.

She has also done volunteer work at the St. Petersburg Free Clinic, coordinating telephones for the FISH program, which matches volunteer drivers with patients in need of transportation. Though herself confined to a wheelchair, Ms. Munson has remained "a beacon of hope and an advocate for the physically and medically [sic.] challenged. She has demonstrated there need be no obstacles if motivated by a willingness to help others."

Among the 400 or so people in attendance at the luncheon were many community dignitaries, including the entire St. Petersburg City Council. Because of Ms. Munson's work at Bayfront Medical Center, several vice-presidents and other supervisors from that hospital were there. Also attending the luncheon were Rev. Phil and Jean Lersch, fellow members with Ms. Munson on the Brethren House Ministries team.

*— reported by Rev. Phil Lersch*




*Bonnie Munson holds the plaque she received in recognition of her community service.*

## Scriptures Now Available in 2,092 of World's Languages

**New York, N.Y.** — The complete Bible has now been published in 341 of the world's languages and the New Testament in 822 additional languages, reports the American Bible Society (ABS) and its global partner, the United Bible Societies.

"We are forever vigilant in our efforts to make the Holy Scriptures available to all peoples of the world," said Dr. Eugene B. Habecker, ABS president, in announcing release of the 1994 Scripture Language Report. "With this report, we now have at least one book of the Bible available in 2,092 of the estimated 6,000 languages in the world. While this is a major accomplishment, we must continue the work."

Four new Bibles were published for the first time in 1994—the Imbabura Quichua Bible in Ecuador, the yiPunu Bible in Cameroon, the Basque Bible in Spain, and the Common Language Pohnpeian Bible in Micronesia. The New Testament is now available for the first time in 18 more languages, including Afar, which is spoken in Ethiopa; kiSagalla, spoken in Kenya; and Garhwali, spoken in India. And at least one book of the Bible became available for the first time in 27 other languages.

# Little Crusader

**Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).**

## Happy Easter Boys and Girls!

My three boys have so much fun this time of year! They look forward to coloring eggs and decorating them. Then comes the really neat part, when all the eggs are hidden and they try to find them. They have quite a race to see who can find the most eggs!

Have you ever looked at an egg closely? An egg has three main parts. One part is the hard shell. It helps to protect the inside of the egg. A second part is the yellow yolk inside the egg. The third part is the white that surrounds the yolk. There are three parts, but one egg.

An egg can help us understand something about God. Just as there are three parts to one egg, even so God is three in one. God is our Father, who created our wonderful world and everything that lives in it. God is the Son, Jesus, who died for us and rose again so that we can go to heaven and live with Him forever. God is the Holy Spirit, who is with us all the time, helping us make good choices and watching over and protecting us. These three "persons" who are one God we call the Trinity. Trinity means three.

The next time you color eggs, remember that like an egg, God is three in one—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but one God.

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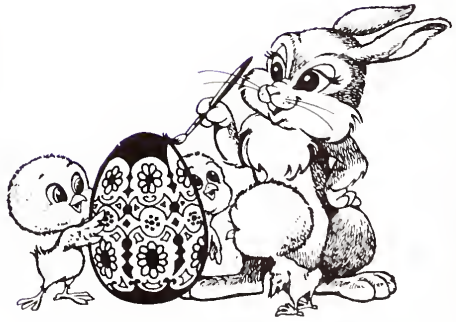
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### *** Special Activity ***

Ask your mom or dad to help you get an egg and crack it open. Do you see the three parts? Can you name them? Now can you name the three persons of the Trinity who are one God?



# Moderator-Elect Lynn Mercer Emphases Unity In Message Presented at Ohio District Conference

**Smithville, Ohio** — "Unity in Christ —That the World May Believe" was the theme of a message by moderator-elect Rev. Lynn Mercer at the Ohio District Conference, held Saturday, March 11, at the Smithville Brethren Church.

Basing his message on a portion of Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" in John 17, Rev. Mercer said that Jesus' prayer for His followers today (as in all times) is that we might be one. Jesus desired that we would be so united in love that the world would believe that the Father had sent His only-begotten Son to be our Savior. He noted with regret that Brethren have not achieved that kind of unity.

He said that one means of achieving this unity is by prayer. Therefore he recommended that the elders in the district plan a district prayer event during the coming year and that the district board of directors continue the "Ohio Prayer Line" that was instituted during the past year. "Yes, there are differences among us," Rev. Mercer said, "but we must *not* allow those differences to divide us." Rather, "In the year ahead, let us emphasize what *unites* us."

Moderator James Koontz presided over the business session, which consisted mainly of receiving reports from district boards, committees, and auxiliaries and from denominational ministries. In elections, Ashland University professor J. Michael Drushal was chosen moderator-elect; Shirley Bowers was elected secretary and Karen Weidenhamer her assistant; Stan Gentle was reelected treasurer and Bill Walk his assistant; and Dorman Ronk was reelected statistician.

In his report of 1994 statistics, Mr. Ronk noted that while the district had a loss in membership of 126, the church growth index increased by 60, with 13 of the districts 23 churches showing an increase. Increases were also seen in both average worship attendance (up 198) and average Sunday school attendance (up 14). It was also announced at the conference that by action of the district board of directors that day, the new Brethren congregation at Medina had been given "class" status in the district.

Three seminars were held during the day-long conference—"Prayer: Becoming God's Friend," led by Dr. Jerry and Julie Flora; "Leadership in the Local Church," led by Dr. Richard Allison; and "Planned Giving," led by Rev. James R. Black.

Following an hour for auxiliary meetings, the conference concluded with comments by Moderator Koontz and installation of newly-elected officers and board and committee members. Moderator Koontz reminded the Brethren of their need to be praying for one another—particularly for leaders and pastors—and of the need to keep their focus on Jesus. Just over 100 delegates (32 elders, 72 lay delegates) and a number of non-delegates attended the conference. The 1996 conference is scheduled for March 9 at the Northview Brethren Life Church near Springboro, Ohio.

*— reported by Dick Winfield*



*A special treat during the conference worship service was music played on dulcimers by Eric and Barb Mast.*

## Rev. Keith Bennett Honored For Service to Community

**Muncie, Ind.** — Rev. Keith Bennett, pastor for the past nine years of the Muncie First Brethren Church, received two awards in January in recognition of his outstanding community service.

On January 16, during the annual Martin Luther King Day celebration, Rev. Bennett was presented the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Service Award by the African-American clergy of the Muncie area. He was given this award in recognition of his dedication to the Combined Clergy organization of the Muncie area and for his service to the community through that organization.

The Combined Clergy is an organization of Muncie-area African-American and white clergy that was formed soon after the Los Angeles riots in order to foster better race relations in the Muncie community. Projects have included working for fair hiring and promotion practices in the police and fire departments and finding business men to give work opportunities to African-American youth. Rev. Bennett has been an integral part of this group, serving recently as co-chair of the organization.

In late January Rev. Bennett received another honor, the Volunteer of the Year Award from Christian Ministries of Delaware County. He was given this award in recognition of his service as chair of the Social Justice Commission, as co-chair of Combined Clergy, and as a member of the Christian Ministries board, the Community Task Force, the Mayor's Steering Committee on Domestic Violence, and the Quality Family Life Commission.

In an article about Rev. Bennett in the Christian Ministries newsletter, Susan Hughes, executive director of the organization, wrote: "To my knowledge, Keith has been involved in nearly every program we have sponsored. But his strengths are his caring for his fellow man and his sensitivity to others' concerns. Highly organized, Keith follows through with planning and detail. I have watched him mediate discussions in a just and Christian manner. He is a joy to work with. I have never known him to be anything but positive and supportive."



*Rev. Keith Bennett with his wife, Marjorie.*

An article by Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal in the March issue of the EVANGELIST ("Taking Steps Toward Racial Reconciliation," pp. 6 & 7) stressed the need for Brethren to become involved in overcoming racism. Rev. Keith Bennett is one member of The Brethren Church who has done just that.

*— reported by Allyson Runkel, Cor. Sec., Muncie First Brethren Church*

## From The Grape Vine

**María Miranda** and her radio program *Para Ti Mujer* ("For You, My Dear Lady") are featured in two articles in the January 1995 issue of *Religious Broadcasting*, the official publication of National Religious Broadcasters. In "What Women Want" written by Mark Ward Sr., Mrs. Miranda is one of five women (the others are Vonette Bright, Elisabeth Elliot, Elisa Mogran, and Arthelene Rippy) whose radio programs are highlighted. The article looks at religious programming that deals with issues and concerns related to women. It notes that *Para Ti Mujer* is aired daily on more than 625 stations with an audience estimated at 100 million listeners. A second article in the magazine, entitled "Getting to Know . . . Maria Miranda," gives more detailed information about the background and outreach of her radio program. Both articles mention The Brethren Church as a cosponsor of the program (along with the Fuller Evangelistic Association).



***Williamstown, Ohio*** *— Women of the Williamstown Brethren Church raised $984 for Brethren missions in Mexico last November at their annual W.M.S. Auction. Jeff Morris (above) auctioned off garden and homemade food and craft items provided by the women. Finger foods gave the bidders energy.* **— reported by Pastor Gene Oburn; photo by Rose Ann Launder**

**Pastor Bill and Gene Skeldon** of the Oak Hill, West Virginia, First Brethren Church recently led a group of Oak Hill area residents on a ten-day visit to the Holy Land. Among the tour participants were two other members of the Oak Hill Church, **Helen Protka** and **Vivian Wygal**. This was Pastor Skeldon's twelfth year to lead a tour to the Holy Land. He considers the trip to be a spiritual pilgrimage rather than a vacation or tour. He is already making plans for a 1996 pilgrimage. This will be an extra special visit, since next year the city of Jerusalem will be celebrating its 3,000th anniversary.

Two young people, **April Watkins** and **David Robinson**, of the Oak Hill, West Virginia, First Brethren Church made noteworthy accomplishments recently. April won the Fayette County Spelling Bee championship, and David was selected to the West Virginia All-State Band.

### In Memory

**Elma Court**, 89, March 20. Member for 62 years of the Elkhart First Brethren Church, where she had served as chair of the Hospitality Ministry, Sunday school teacher, treasurer of the Win-A-Couple Class, and treasurer of W.M.S. 1. Services by Rev. Ray Barkey, pastor of the Maple Grove Church of the Brethren.

**Willobelle Lyons**, 86, March 17. Member for 70 years of the Bryan First Brethren Church, where she was a member of the Ever Ready Sunday School Class and the W.M.S. Services by Pastor H. Ray Aspinall.

**Ruth Moyer**, 92, March 12. Member of The Brethren Church of New Lebanon. Services by Rev. Brian White.

**Maryllis Hendrix**, 84, March 7. Active member for 52 years of the Burlington First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Dennis Sigle and Rev. Kurt Flora. Mrs. Hendrix had 8 children, 37 grandchildren, and 53 great-grandchildren!

**Mary Irene Tiger**, 83, March 5. Member of the Pleasant View Brethren Church, where she had served as a Sunday school teacher and took part in the jail and street ministries; she was also a member of the W.M.S. Services by Pastor R. Keith Hensley.

**Charlotte Putman**, 71, March 4. Member for 58 years of the Maurertown Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Richard Craver.

**Odessa Sluss**, 92, February 27. Member and deaconess of the Louisville Brethren Bible Church and former member and deaconess at the Louisville First Brethren Church. She was also the mother of Brethren Elder James Sluss. Services by Lousiville Brethren Bible Pastor Chris Moellering.

**Nell Lynch**, 93, February 25. Member for 84 years of the St. James Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Brian Moore.

**Robert Perkins, Sr.**, 86, February 23. Member for 56 years of the Bryan First Brethren Church. Services by H. Raymond Aspinall.

**Helen Barnhart Webb**, 79, February 23. Member for many years of the Masontown Brethren Church. Known for the poetry she wrote. Services by Pastor Curt Nies.

**Wayne Hawkins**, 78, February 20. Member of the Milledgeville Brethren Church, where he served on various committees and the Official Board, sang in the Senior Choir, and directed the Junior Choir for 14 years. Services by Pastor Kenneth Sullivan.

**Harry Hamp**, 78, February 18. Member of the Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church. Memorial service by Pastor C. William Cole.

**Christine Campbell Beckelheimer**, 78, February 7. Longtime member of the Oak Hill First Brethren Church. Services by Rev. Bill Menefee.

**Louise Stahl Blacksten**, 67, February 1. Member for many years of the Linwood Brethren Church and former member of the Valley Brethren Church. At Linwood she served as a Sunday school teacher and was in charge of the Cradle Roll for more than 30 years. She was the sister of Brethren Elder Robert Stahl. Services by Linwood Pastor Robert L. Keplinger.

**Helen Wirts**, 88, January 22. Lifetime member of the Roanoke First Brethren Church, where she served for many years as treasurer of the W.M.S. Services by Pastor Ron Burns.

**Linda Sue Zent**, 47, December 1. Friend of the Roanoke First Brethren Church. Services by Rev. Paul Tinkel and Rev. Walter Adams.

### Weddings

**Lorie Ann Rowland** to **Andrew Orebaugh**, March 11, at the Oakville First Brethren Church; Rev. Charles Craig officiating. Groom a member of the Oakville First Brethren Church.

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# We Done Good!

**(Or More Properly: We Did Well!)**

*Brethren gave a total of $80,358 for World Relief in 1994. That's a 12% increase over the $71,828 given in 1993. It also represents 128% of the total Fair Share* for all Brethren churches.*

One reason last year's giving for World Relief increased was because Brethren responded generously to the urgent appeal last August for funds for Rwanda. Thanks to your response, we were able to send $11,742 to World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals for Rwandan relief.

# But We Can Do Better!

While last year's giving for World Relief was $8,530 higher than for 1993, it was $8,119 *less* than in 1992. And while denomination-wide giving exceeded the total Fair Share for all Brethren churches, this is because 49 churches gave more than their Fair Share.* Meanwhile, 68 churches gave less than their Fair Share, with 21 of those churches giving nothing at all for World Relief (which means that the members of those churches gave nothing).

Furthermore, while the *total* of $80,358 for World Relief looks impressive, when divided by the total membership of the church, it represents average giving of just $6.13 per member. That's less than we would spend on one meal at a sit-down restaurant. And this is for a whole year! Is there one of us who could not spare at least a dollar a month to help alleviate human suffering?

## *Yes, Brethren, We Can Do Better!*

*The need is so great. And we have been blessed so abundantly. Let us share more of what we have to help others who need our help so desperately.*

Please give generously this month through your local church. Or send your gift directly to:

**World Relief**
The Brethren Church, Inc.
524 College Ave.
Ashland, OH 44805

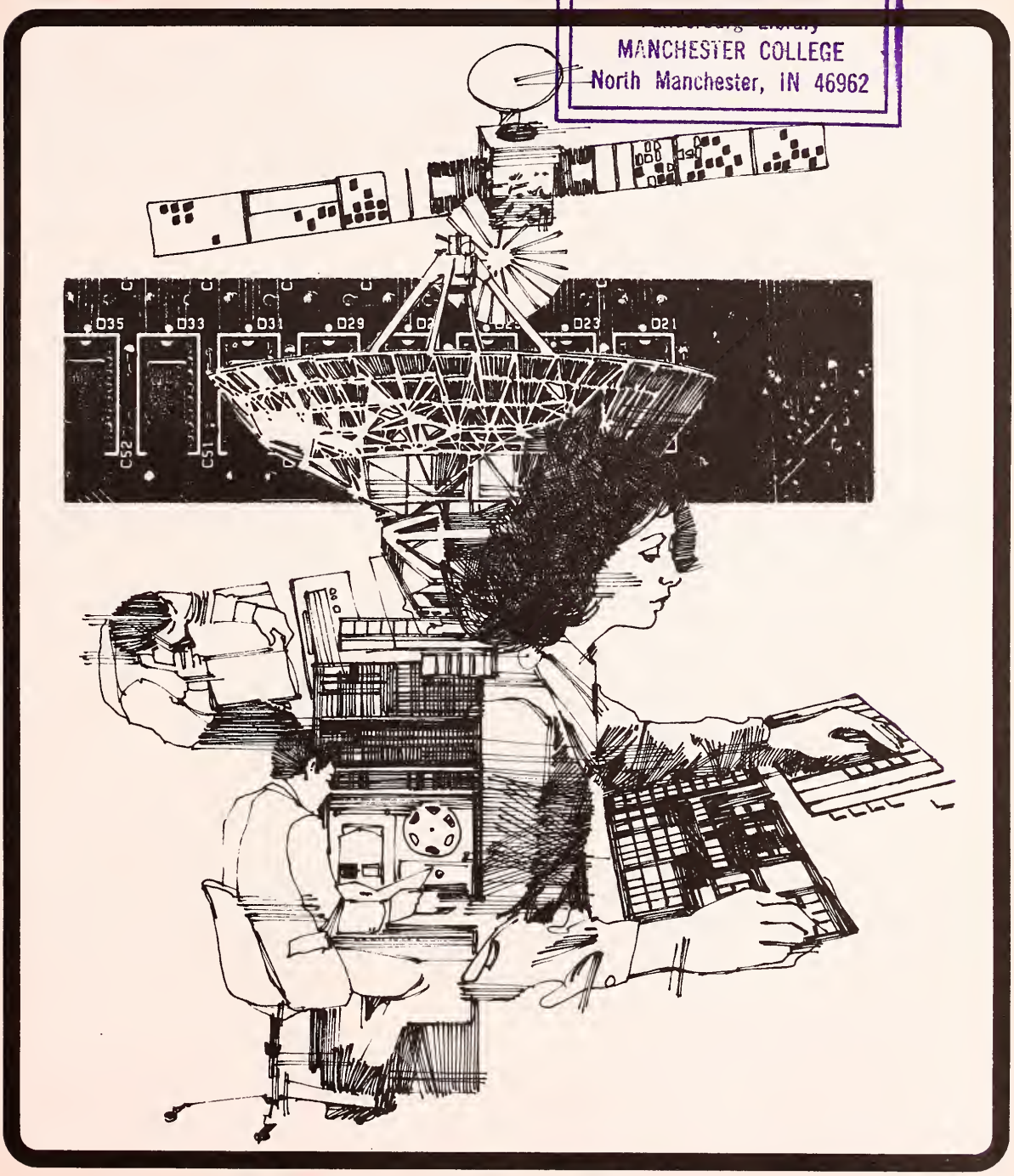
***Thank you!***

*A church's Fair Share equals $6 times its Church Growth Index, which is calculated by adding its membership, average worship attendance, and average Sunday school attendance, then dividing by three.

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**Using the Technology of Our Day to Reach the World for Christ.** **See page 4.**

# "Oh Be Careful Little Eyes What You See"

By Richard C. Winfield, Editor

"TAKE CHARGE of TV" is the theme of a program being sponsored by several magazines* that serve Christians affiliated with the "Restoration Movement" (Christian Churches and Churches of Christ).

These magazines have proposed a three-week program. Week one: Monitor your TV viewing, keeping a log showing how much television each family member watches and what each watches. Week two: turn the thing off. Don't watch it at all! Week three: Turn it back on (if you wish), but watch it with more discretion and discuss with other members of your family what you watch.

## A good idea

The idea of "taking charge of TV" sounds like a good one, whether or not one follows this three-week sequence. Unfortunately, too often, it seems, the television takes charge of us. Or am I the only one who ever decides to sit down and relax by watching a little TV and ends up wasting the whole evening watching several mindless programs?

Apparently I'm *not* the only one, for Christian researcher George Barna reports studies that indicate that the average television household has the set on for about seven hours a day and that the typical adult spends about four hours each day watching television. At first, I found these figures a little unbelievable, but upon reflection I realized that in many homes the television goes on when the kids get home from school and doesn't go off until after the 11:00 news.

But we are only talking about non-Christian homes, right? *Wrong!* Barna goes on to say that "The typical evangelical spends just less than fifty days a year glued to the tube."* Assuming those are 24-hour days, that means that *conservative Christians* are spending about three and one-fourth hours a day watching television.

## Other uses for our time

Now assuming for the moment that all the stuff we evangelicals watch is good, wholesome stuff, that's still a lot of time devoted to watching visual images on a screen. That's time that we could possibly spend talking to children or grandchildren (or calling our mother, father, or grandmother). It's time we could spend reading the Bible and praying. (I often wonder how many hours people who say they can't find time for personal devotions spend watching TV.) It's time that we could use doing volunteer work, writing letters of encouragement, or attending church meetings. It might even be time we could spend getting more sleep! In fact, there are any number of other, useful ways we could spend some of the time we waste watching television.

And as I said, that's assuming that all the stuff we watch on television is good stuff. But the truth is, a lot of what many of us watch is not good stuff. Much of it is just nonsense and some of it is downright evil—foul language (including the Lord's name in vain), drinking, dirty jokes and sexual innuendo, scantily-clad individuals, sex scenes, and violence of the most graphic kind. Not to mention the materialism promoted by both the programs and the advertisements.

Television can bring a whole month's worth of temptation into our lives in one evening. During mid-winter in Ohio, you don't see too many people running around in skimpy swim wear. But turn on your television and you won't have to watch very long before you see a few.

On the positive side, television travelogues can show us places we might never get to see otherwise—Egypt, Rome, China, the Swiss Alps, South American rain forests, the Sahara desert, just to name a few. But television also has a way of taking us other places we probably would never get to see otherwise, places we have no business seeing—bars, nightclubs, strip joints, even into bedrooms where we watch people (usually people who are *not* married to one another) perform the most intimate of physical acts. And the truth is, we have become so accustomed to seeing these things that we hardly give them a second thought.

## Think about these things

I think it is significant in this connection that the theme verse for the "Take Charge of TV" program is Philippians 4:8— "Finally, brothers [and sisters], whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (*NIV*). A lot of what comes to us on television does not fit into these categories, and therefore we ought to refrain from watching it.

As I was writing these thoughts, I remembered the little song that children learn in Sunday school:

*Oh be careful little eyes what you see,*
*Oh be careful little eyes what you see,*
*There's a Father up above, and He's looking down in love,*
*Oh be careful little eyes what you see.*

We certainly want to be concerned about what the "little eyes" in our family are seeing. And we need to be careful about what our bigger eyes are seeing as well. For the same Father is looking down upon *all* of us in love.

So "taking charge of TV" makes a lot of sense. We would do well to consider seriously how much time we spend watching television and to scrutinize carefully the kinds of programs we view. And having done that, let us take whatever remedial action is required. [✝]

*I read about the program in *Christian Standard* magazine, which we receive at the National Office on an exchange basis (we send them a copy of our magazine, they send us a copy of theirs). The other periodicals are *The Lookout, Restoration Herald, Horizons,* and *One Body.*

*_Absolute Confusion_, p. 114; Regal Books, 1993; as quoted in *Christian Standard* for April 23, 1995, p. 3.

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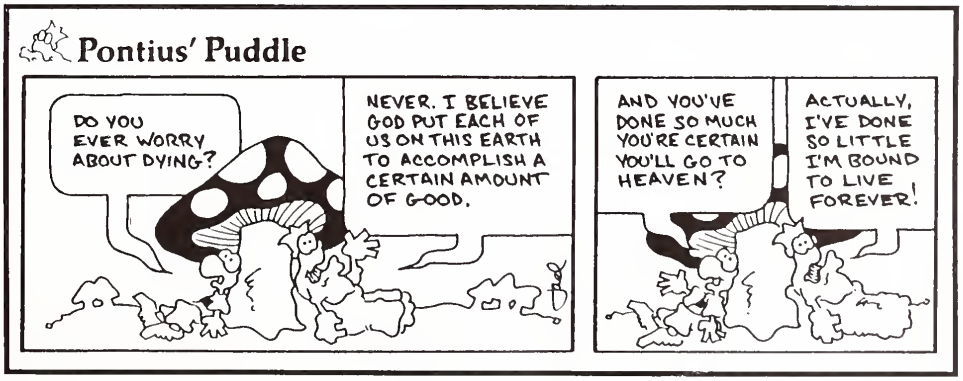
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The May–June ***Woman's Outlook Newsletter*** is in the center of this issue.

**Answers to the Little Crusader page:**

1. If we hear and follow God words, we will produce a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what is sown.

2. There are many answers you could write: pray, go to church, go to Sunday school, sing Christian songs, listen to Christian music, obey God's word, and so on.



# Billy Graham: "Skywalker for God"

## Evangelist Conducts Most Far-Reaching Crusade in History

By Dan Wooding



EVANGELIST Billy Graham became a "Skywalker for God" during his extraordinary Global Mission, as his March 14–18 crusade at the Hiram Bithorn Stadium in San Juan, Puerto Rico, was extended for three days by satellite in 116 languages to 3,000 centers in 185 countries.

Even as his voice "marched through time and space" with a clear message on the reality of a personal God, a team of 48 interpreters in sound-proof booths in nearby Roberto Clemente Coliseum spoke the words of Billy Graham so that people in their countries could hear the "good news." An additional 68 languages were interpreted at the downlink site.

### A global altar call

Mr. Graham's invitation from the stadium to receive Christ by "coming forward to the front" soared into the heavens and appeared miraculously on big screens in some 3,000 centers around the world in all 29 time zones.

The evangelist's face, which looked as though it had been hewn from pure Italian marble, shone as he voiced the words, "No matter what language you speak, no matter what culture you're from, no matter what situation you find yourself in—all around the world, come and give your heart to Christ."

In what was the world's first global altar call to the entire human race, people in what was a museum of atheism in Tirana, Albania, came to the front of the screen there, as did survivors of the killing fields of Rwanda, shuffling through the dust of the refugee camp in Goma, Zaire.

Ten million people around the world attended Global Mission venues each night, and in Puerto Rico attendance records were broken as crowds of 55,000—more than triple its capacity—jammed into the baseball stadium after battling gridlock traffic jams outside. The five-day attendance averaged above 35,000, of which an average of more than 1,550 inquirers responded each evening to Mr. Graham's invitation to make a commitment to Christ.

### Same moon shines on all

An extraordinary experience took place one night when Mr. Graham pointed to a full moon in Puerto Rico and the television camera panned upwards to capture it. All over the world in outdoor "cathedrals," people looked up and gasped as they saw that same full moon over their land.

In addition to the attendance at the satellite venues, more than one billion people heard Mr. Graham's message about the cross of Christ as it was broadcast during Easter week in prime time on national television networks in 117 countries.

Among those attending the final night in San Juan was Dr. Peter Kuzmic, president of the Protestant Evangelical Council of Bosnia and Croatia. He revealed that his own city of Osijek, Croatia, was carrying the Global Mission.

### Good news to a broken world

Fighting back tears, he told me, "Only three years ago, over 150,000 shells almost destroyed Osijek in eight months, and now every night hundreds of individuals are being embraced by the saving love of Jesus through the preaching of the 'good news.' It truly is 'good news' for bad times in Croatia, Bosnia, and other parts of our broken world."

Speaking of the Global Mission, Dr. Kusmic added, "This is a most amazing and effective combination of the simplicity and power of the proclaimed word and the complexity and efficiency of global communicative technology in fulfillment of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14, 'This Gospel . . . to all nations.' "

Poland also saw a tremendous movement of God's Spirit. In Walbryzch, the man responsible for the technical arrangements gave his life to the Lord. In Malbork, a young man who committed his life to Christ on Fri-

---

*Mr. Wooding, an award-winning British journalist, is the founder and international director of ASSIST Ministries and a syndicated columnist carried in publications around the world.*

day returned the next evening with his wife and daughter. They, too, made decisions for Christ.

### To Russia with love

In many of the republics of the former Soviet Union, tens of thousands of people responded to the message of hope preached by Billy Graham. In the Russian town of Murmansk, an overflow crowd of 2,200 attended the last meeting, and two extra television monitors were set up in the foyer. Five hundred and eight responded to the invitation to accept Christ.

Seven hundred attended the mission in Chita, and 100 people responded to the invitation. Sergey, a 27-year-old Russian army political officer, came forward. "He was very distraught with his life, and this brought him to God," reported a leader at the meeting. "In a rather unusual manner he had acquired a New Testament. It occurred while on duty one day as he came upon a group of soldiers playing cards. The stakes were a New Testament. He confiscated it and began to read it."

Albania became infamous in world history when its leader, Enver Hoxha, declared his country to be the "World's First Atheistic Nation." But now, he is dead and some 30 churches are open in his country. For three nights, the Global Mission was shown in "The Pyramid," a building constructed for the glory of Hoxha and his atheistic philosophies, now an international center of culture.

Nearly 800 people attended each service, and many others were turned away due to lack of space. Scores came and stood in front of a giant screen to commit their lives to Christ in a country where only four years ago they would have been imprisoned for such an action.

At the roof of the world in Kathmandu, Nepal, the first night of the meetings in this beautiful Himalayan kingdom started against a backdrop of a magnificent sunset. This was the first time any Christian meeting had taken place at the site, the second-largest stadium in the city. Approximately 3,000 turned out, and at least 90 of those came forward at the invitation. The second night, being Friday, drew a crowd of 3,500, with 120 responses being recorded.

In the former Marxist state of Ethiopia, crowds of 40,000, some 5,000 more than the official capacity of the facility, attended each night of the crusade in Addis Ababa. Hundreds responded to the invitation.

Rain threatened the first meeting at an open air soccer stadium in Pétionville, Haiti. Concerned that such weather might prove disastrous to the success of the meetings, the local coordinators went to prayer. Within minutes the rain ceased. When Billy Graham shared, "I am not offering you a dead Christ," the entire audience burst into applause.

As his sermon progressed, so did the sense of excitement in the stadium. Attendance was estimated to be between five and ten thousand, with nearly 500 counselors prepared to assist the inquirers, who filled both sides of the stage.

### "It is the Lord's doing"

Before the program began, a pastor said, "People are afraid to come out because of insecurity and violence that still exists. This is a big and tremendous event for my country. It is the Lord's doing."

India's 14 Global Mission venues reported that on the second night of meetings, 83,650 heard the gospel and 3,476 responded to the invitation of Mr. Graham.

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, some 1,500 turned up for the meeting at a Chinese cinema hall converted into a church, which is now proclaiming the gospel instead of the usual fare of gory Chinese movies.

In Rwanda, the satellite meetings nearly did not take place when a local official who had given verbal approval for the public meeting place to be used as the Global Mission venue left the city without notifying any of his colleagues that official permission had been granted. This did not stop local organizers, who simply moved the venue to a small church. Two thousand packed into the sanctuary, and the area outside the church was even more crowded around windows and doors.

In Zaire, despite a fierce tropical downpour and fears of violence, some 20,000 Rwandan refugees attended a food distribution compound in Goma to hear Billy Graham preach the gospel message. Many responded to Mr. Graham's invitation. On the second night, a crowd double that of the first night came, and nearly 1,000 responded. Locals were encouraged by the fact that when people had walked home in the dark the previous evening, not one single incident was reported—something that has not been true for many months in this city.

### "It can't be done"

Billy Graham's Global Mission became a "stairway to heaven" for millions of people around the world, thanks to some of the most sophisticated television and satellite technology ever assembled.

"Even the television industry acknowledges that this is the biggest point-to-point relay around the world of its kind in history," said David Rennie, a British electronics engineer who has worked with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association for many years and who traveled from London to work as a consultant for this event.

"There are those who are experts in the field of satellite communications who said that a project as complex as this just could not be done, but we have done it—for the glory of God," Rennie added.

Greg Laurie, an evangelist with Harvest Crusades and pastor of the 15,000-strong Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California, was on hand to observe the crusade. He told me, "I think that the theme, 'The Time Is Now,' that has been used by Global Mission is incredibly appropriate. Technology where it is at this moment, combined with the stature of Billy Graham, results in an explosive combination."

"I can't think of anyone besides Mr. Graham who could lead an event of this magnitude. One thing that struck me personally was when he was giving the invitation and he said, 'All around the world—you come now.' At that moment the magnitude of this event hit me."

For those around the world who responded to Christ, their time was now! And for Billy Graham, at the age of 76, he was conducting a "Mission Without Walls" that was the capstone of his inspiring ministry. [⇧]

# Brethren Women in Ministry

By Matthew W. Hamel

From its beginning in 1708, when three of the first eight members were women, the Brethren movement has been blessed by the contributions of women. In this quiz, we look at some of the leading Brethren women of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

1. The earliest known woman preacher in the Brethren movement was Sarah Righter Major. Born in 1808 near Philadelphia, Sarah Righter was converted at age 18 under the preaching of Harriet Livermore, a well-known evangelist of the time. She joined the Brethren congregation in Philadelphia and soon afterwards experienced a call to preach. In 1842 she married Thomas Major, a Brethren minister, and together they held many preaching meetings in Ohio and Indiana. Her preaching ministry was:

Readily accepted by the Brethren. Go to 9.

Met with some resistance from the Brethren. Go to 15.

2. Yes. Like many Brethren since, Laura and her husband, George, spent their later years in Florida. In 1910 they settled near Hallandale (between Ft. Lauderdale and Miami), where they entered the fruit-growing industry. Prior to this, in 1896, Laura preached at a three-week revival in Hagerstown, Md., during which 36 members were added to the church. The pastor described the revival as "The most successful meeting ever held in this charge." It was at this series of meetings that Sarah was dubbed the D. L. Moody of The Brethren Church. Move on down to 4.



*Laura Hendrick*

3. Correct. The passage reads, ". . . women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. . . . for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church" (I Cor. 14:34–35, *NIV*). Go to 19.

4. In addition to preaching and leading the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor, Brethren women also served as missionaries both at home and abroad. Ada Garber Drushal worked with her husband in the mountains of eastern Kentucky, where she served as treasurer, bookkeeper, Bible-teacher, midwife, undertaker, and herb-healer. The primary focus of the Drushals' work in Kentucky was:

Operation of a school. Go to 16.

A radio ministry. Go to 7.

5. Correct! The Michigan District passed its resolution in 1890. This district, which no longer exists (our only remaining Michigan congregation is now a part of the Indiana District), also offered many Bible passages in support of a woman's eligibility to "the office of minister or deacon." Swing by 14, then on to 18.

6. Good choice! A charter member of the Masontown, Pa., Brethren Church, Mary became in 1887 the first president of the Sisters' Society of Christian Endeavor (S.S.C.E., which later became the Woman's Missionary Society). The S.S.C.E. called her to the ministry, and she was ordained at Masontown in 1890. Between January and June of 1894, Mary preached 207 sermons in 187 days, culminating in her delivery of the Sunday morning sermon at that year's General Conference. Jump on down to number 11.



*Mary Sterling*

7. Sorry, you're on the wrong frequency! See 16.

8. Although fair-skinned people were undoubtedly rarely seen by the Kikuyu, this was not the reason they considered Dr. Florence Gribble beautiful. See 10.

9. You misjudge the Brethren of that time. See 15.

10. Correct! Among the Kikuyu, women were considered beautiful if their upper front teeth were spaced widely apart. The Gribbles were not married when they went to Kenya in 1908. But in 1912, they were part of a pioneer party that was sent from Kenya to the Belgian Congo (Zaire), and they were married there the following year. They served in Kenya with the Africa Inland Mission, but in 1914 the Gribbles were appointed to lead the first Brethren Church missionary party to Africa. It was 1921 before that party was able to begin work in a section of French Equatorial Africa that is now

*Mr. Hamel, a member of the Johnstown, Pa., Second Brethren Church, currently lives in Ashland, Ohio, and attends the new Brethren Church of Medina.*

***"I am glad I never stood in the way of women preaching, and that I belong to a church that assists them in doing so."***

*— Brethren Leader Henry R. Holsinger*

located in the Central African Republic and in Chad. Go to 22.

**11.** Soon after the founding of The Brethren Church, a number of resolutions were passed by district and national conferences in support of the growing number of women missionaries, preachers, and leaders. The first district to pass such a resolution was:

The Michigan district. Go to 5.

The Illiokota district. Go to 14.

**12.** Afraid not! Go east (see 2).

**13.** On the foreign field, Brethren missionaries James and Florence Newberry Gribble began Brethren mission work in Africa. According to Dr. Gribble's autobiography, she was considered beautiful by the Kikuyu people of British East Africa (Kenya) because of:

Her fair skin. Go to 8.

The spacing of her front teeth. Go to 10.

**14.** You're late again! This district, which encompassed the Brethren congregations in Illinois, Iowa, and South Dakota (now the Central District, since we no longer have churches in South Dakota), passed its resolution in 1891, a *year later* than the Michigan District. The statement resolved "that no distinction be made in representative bodies of the church on basis of sex." Pronouncements in support of the service of women in the church were also passed in the Indiana District (1891), the Pennsylvania District (1892), and the Ohio District (1894). See 5, then head on over to 18.

**15.** Correct. The 1834 Annual Meeting responded negatively to a query on women preaching (apparently directed at Sarah). However, a member of a committee sent by Annual Meeting to counsel Sarah to remain silent said, "I could not give my vote to silence someone who could out-preach me." It is of interest to note that Sarah was one of the preachers at the 1878 Annual Meeting. Continue on to 17.

**16.** You deserve to be on the honor roll! In her 70 years of dedicated service in the Lost Creek area, Ada Drushal helped in the day-to-day operation of what is now known as Riverside Christian Training School. She was also known to preach on occasion, with "sledgehammer blows." Proceed to 13.

**17.** Like many Brethren women of that time, Sarah Righter Major was active in the temperance movement, anti-slavery efforts, and home visitation. But her role as a preacher was seen as controversial by those Brethren who held to a traditional understanding of:

1 Corinthians 14:34–35. Go to 3.

1 Corinthians 11:5. Go to 20.

**18.** Laura E. N. Grossnickle Hendrick was another prominent woman in the early decades of The Brethren Church. Ordained by the Ohio District in 1891, she was in much demand as a speaker at district and national conferences. But her greatest contribution to the church was her service as president of the S.S.C.E. During her tenure as president (1894–1898), she visited 20 local societies and organized 38 new congregational chapters. Forced to relocate due to her husband's failing health, they were among the first Brethren to settle in this state:

Florida. Go to 2.

Arizona. Go to 12.

**19.** Following the 1881–1883 division of the Brethren into the Old Order, Conservative, and Progressive branches, the place of women in ministry became a priority in The Brethren Church. Following the organization of our denomination, Brethren visionary Henry Holsinger wrote, "I am glad I never stood in the way of women preaching, and that I belong to a church that assists them in doing so." The first woman to be ordained in The Brethren Church was:

Nora Pearl Bracken Davis. Go to 21.

Mary Malinda Sterling. Go to 6.

**20.** Afraid not. As a matter of fact, some use this text ("And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head . . .") *in support of* a woman's right to preach, saying that it implies that it is all right for a woman to "prophesy" (preach) as long as she does so with her head covered. This passage was also used to support the Brethren tradition of head coverings for women. Now have a look at 3.

**21.** No, you're off by 29 years. A native of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Nora Davis was ordained in October 1919 at the Vinco Brethren Church after serving the Pleasant View Brethren Church in Vandergrift, Pa. She later served as Superintendent of the Children's Division for our denomination, supervising Sunday schools and writing lessons for children. Go to 6.

**22.** Congratulations. With that quick side trip to Africa, you have now completed your journey through this quiz, which has looked at contributions of women in The Brethren Church.

### For further reading:


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**Understanding the Bible**

# The Original Philip's Translation

## *or*

## Do You Understand What You Are Reading?

**By Brian H. Moore and Brenda B. Colijn**

THE STORY of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–39) is an inspiring account of how one person who was sensitive to the Holy Spirit was used to lead another person who was seeking for a deeper understanding of God to a full Christian experience. The story is often taught as an illustration of how to do one-on-one evangelism. (The Brethren in times past have appealed to it as an example of how to do baptism!) And it is a vivid account of God at work in the early church.

We would like to consider in this article how it also illustrates the problem of the unclear passage of Scripture and the need for "outside" help in understanding such passages. All of us at times need a key to unlock the meaning of a given text. In the wise providence of God, the Ethiopian eunuch was not abandoned in his search for meaning. Philip, in tune with the voice of the Spirit, went to his aid and helped him to understand the confusing text.

### Watch your attitude

Before we consider the problem of the unclear passage of Scripture, we must first clear our understanding on some other matters. First, we must be sure of the attitude with which we approach the text. According to the Scriptures, God hides some things from people because they are not in sympathy with Him or His message. For example, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing . . ." (1 Cor. 1:18*). Later in that same letter, Paul says, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and *he cannot understand them*, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14, *emphasis ours*).

### Be wary of a closed mind

Writing even more strongly, Paul says this about the Israelites who are closed to the message of Christ: "But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. . . . But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Cor. 3:14, 16). And more strongly still, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:3–4).

A certain female atheist of notoriety claims that she read the Bible "one weekend and found it to be full of incredible nonsense and contradictions." So no matter how much explaining Philip or anyone does, some folks will not understand, because it is not a question of the mind but of the heart. Jesus said, "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (John 7:17). Understanding the Bible is first of all a moral rather than an intellectual question.

The Ethiopian eunuch was obviously sincere in his quest for understanding. He had been to Jerusalem to worship, and after worship he was searching the Scriptures. He did not bring a challenging or defiant spirit to the Scriptures; rather, he brought a compliant and submissive spirit.

### Check your motivation

A second matter needs to be addressed: Why do we want to know the meaning of a difficult passage? Sometimes people seem to be attracted to the obscure and vague passages of the Bible. But why? Is it so they can appear scholarly? Is it so they can be "one up on" someone else? Why do some folks want to dwell almost entirely on difficult passages in Daniel and Revelation? We do not intend to convey that some parts of the Bible are not worthy of our study, but we do feel it is important that one have the right motives for studying them.

"Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case . . ." (Heb.

*Quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version* except where noted otherwise.

*Rev. Moore is pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church. Dr. Colijn is a member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church in Worthington, Ohio, and an adjunct professor at Ashland Theological Seminary. Both are members of The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

**Correspondence Welcomed**

The members of the General Conference Executive Council's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication invite readers to suggest topics or Bible passages to discuss in future articles in this column. Send questions, comments, or suggestions to the committee in care of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

***"Approach the text with prayer. Since these things are spiritually discerned, consciously adopt an attitude of dependence on the Spirit of God to open your mind and heart to the text."***

6:9). But even assuming we approach the Scriptures "with glad and sincere hearts," we still may not be able to understand certain passages. What then? Back to the Gaza strip. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

"How can I," the Ethiopian eunuch replied, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to join him in the chariot, and Philip explained the passage to him.

## Follow these suggestions

Since Philip is no longer available to explain our troublesome passages, we offer the following suggestions.

**1.** Approach the text with prayer. Since these things are spiritually discerned, consciously adopt an attitude of dependence on the Spirit of God to open your mind and heart to the text.

**2.** Assume that the text in question really does make sense. It has a meaning and was written for a purpose. In other words, assume that its meaning can become clear if we will pursue it.

**3.** Be willing to dig. As has been said, "The best gold is not on the surface; nuggets must be mined." Luke described his need to research the sources, and his writing reveals that he "carefully investigated everything from the beginning" (Luke 1:3).

**4.** Remember the primary rule of interpretation: consider the context! Verses must be interpreted in their setting, not in isolation (with the possible exception of Proverbs). A careful reading of the context will many times yield greater understanding.

**5.** Use several translations and paraphrases. Paraphrases such as *The Living Bible* or *The Message* are easier to understand because they include much interpretation. In our opinion, they should be consulted last because of this feature. (In most cases, paraphrases are the work of an individual and represent that person's interpretation.) On the other hand, there is no need in our day to confine ourselves to obscure language when the key to understanding may be simply a matter of updating the words.

**6.** With pencil and notebook, try to outline the paragraph, the chapter, or even the entire book in which the difficult text is found. Chapter and verse divisions are not sacred; sometimes we must move beyond these artificial devices to get a clearer picture of what the author is saying.

**7.** Try to find the background or setting of the book. Why was this book written? Assume that it was primarily written for its first readers. What would they hear the author saying or describing? A source such as *Eerdmans Handbook of the Bible* will help with this step. Remember, sometimes the problem of understanding arises because we want the author to answer questions he doesn't intend to discuss.

**8.** If a person, place, event, thing, or practice isn't clear, look it up in a Bible dictionary or a book about Bible times. Two noteworthy examples are the *New Bible Dictionary* (J. D. Douglas, ed.) and *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times* (Ralph Gower).

**9.** Sometimes the meaning of a word may be causing problems in understanding. It's a good idea to use a concordance to see how that word is used elsewhere by biblical writers. Further, a tool such as *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* could be helpful.

**10.** Cross references are helpful if used judiciously. But just because an identical word is used in another passage does not mean the ideas are identical. Use cross references, but use them carefully.

**11.** When all else fails, consult commentaries and/or other books that explain passages. The *Hard Sayings* series from InterVarsity Press, *Difficult Passages in the New Testament* by Stein or *Today's Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* by O'Brien specifically address difficult portions of the Bible. Study Bibles complete with notes of all kinds may be helpful. But remember, even though they may be the work of scholars who have devoted their lives to the study of the Scriptures, these resources are not infallible.

**12.** Be willing to subject your findings to a study group of sincere seekers after truth. While that may run the risk of "pooled ignorance," it may also allow the Spirit of God to speak through His people so they can help one another discern what the Spirit is saying.

Finally, remember the wisdom of Peter Marshall: "It's not the parts of the Bible I don't understand which give me trouble; it's the parts of the Bible I understand all too well which give me the most difficulty!" The "things . . . written aforetime were written for our learning," not for our confusion or bewilderment (Rom. 15:4, KJV). Therefore, "let us press on to know the Lord, and to practice what we know." [⇧]

### Understanding the Bible??

*A Church of England publication listed the following children's answers to church school questions:*

- Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.
- The fifth commandment is: Humor thy father and mother.
- Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.
- Mary was the mother of Jesus, and sang the Magna Carta.
- Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat twelve partridges.
- The natives of Macedonia did not believe, so Paul got stoned.
- The First Commandment: Eve told Adam to eat the apple.

— from *1001 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking*, edited by Michael Hodgin (Zondervan, 1994)

# Evangelicals Declare Their Oneness in Christ at the 53rd Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals

UNITY IN CHRIST was the focus as Christians from across our nation gathered in Louisville, Kentucky, March 5–7 for the 53rd annual convention of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).

"One Faith, One Witness, One Hope" was the theme of the convention. This theme was addressed by the three main speakers at the gathering—Duane Litfin, president of Wheaton (Ill.) College; Morris Chapman, president of the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Convention; and Paul Conn, president of Lee College in Cleveland, Tenn. The theme was also the subject of a position paper adopted at the convention business session (*see below*).

Several members of The Brethren Church attended all or part of the convention, including Rev. David Cooksey, Rev. Gene Eckerley, Dr. Fred Finks, Rev. Tim Garner, Chaplain David Graetz, Chaplain Ken Madison, Dr. Juan Carlos and

***NAE Position Paper***

## One Faith, One Witness, One Hope: Celebrating Our Unity in Jesus Christ

The unity of the body of Christ is one of the great themes of the New Testament. When people come to Christ through repentance and faith, they not only become "new creatures in Christ," but become members of Christ's one body as well. "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). As members of Christ's Body and as members of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), we commit ourselves to one another in a loving fellowship that promotes cooperative effort in Christian witness and celebration of all that we share together in Christ.

We celebrate our one faith. Our Statement of Faith reflects the fact that we accept the Bible as our authority and rule of faith and practice. The Lord God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the object and provider of our one faith. "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:18). We "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

We celebrate our one witness. "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Yet, "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17). Our united witness to the gospel of Christ has never been needed more. Religious syncretism, moral relativism, extreme individualism, materialism and racism are dominant ideologies of the age, undermining the institutions of family, church and civil government which are ordained by God. Knowing the power of God's truth to transform, we unite in a fresh commitment of ourselves to God in order faithfully to proclaim and demonstrate biblical Christianity.

We celebrate our one hope. "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead" (1 Cor. 15:19–20). Through Jesus Christ we believe in God the Father, who through the power of the Holy Spirit raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so our faith and hope are in the triune God. We anticipate the "glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). We anticipate that time when "the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev. 21:3–4).

United in Christ and with a firm commitment to our one faith, one witness, and one hope, we resolve to serve our Lord by *standing for biblical truth*, calling evangelicals to bear witness to the absolute standard of biblical truth and its application to every area of life, modeling Christian unity based upon a commitment to biblical truth and the lordship of Jesus Christ. We will do this by identifying the needs and issues around which our members have common concerns, developing ways and means to meet these needs and to address these issues, and a collegial environment which will support the mission and ministry of each member unit.

We resolve to serve our Lord by *speaking with a representative* voice. We will do this by proclaiming the gospel globally and ministering to human needs—physical, emotional, and spiritual, and identifying sociocultural issues and addressing them with a biblical, prophetic perspective.

We resolve to serve our Lord by *serving the evangelical community*. We will do this by enabling evangelical organizations to fulfill their ministries through encouragement, support, information, cooperative action, service, and education in the nature of contemporary issues, thus providing a support network for effective response and action.

As we, the National Association of Evangelicals, serve the Lord in these ways, we do so in the knowledge that we are pleasing our Lord Jesus Christ whose prayer "that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:11) will be lived out before an unbelieving world, until such time as our faith is face-to-face, our witness is verified, and our hope is complete! [✞]

# The Woman's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Woman's Missionary Society

May–June 1995 Volume 8, Number 5

## The President's Pen

Dear Ladies,

As I write this, I am in Tucson, Arizona. Jim and I are staying with our friends, Bill and Fran Curtis. Tucson is such a beautiful city! When we left Ashland, it was in the 30s (cold!) and it was in the 70s when we arrived in Tucson. The sun felt so good!

In Ashland, the tulips are coming up, as well as other flowers. We know that spring is "just around the corner." It is a beautiful time of year, with signs of new life all around us.

Spring puts me in the mood to *Spring Houseclean!* (It really does.) I like to sit back and look at a room all clean from top to bottom. I even enjoy washing windows! The sun is so much brighter coming in through clean windows. Now, before you all think I'm "weird," let me tell you I don't start spring-cleaning like our grandmothers —turning everything inside out the first sign of a sunny spring day. It usually takes me until Christmas to finish my "spring-cleaning." By then, the first rooms I cleaned need a quick going over before the kids all come home for the Christmas holidays. When I was much younger and a full-time stay-at-home mother, I finished in a couple of weeks. Age has slowed me down a little (really—a *lot!)*

Spring can also be a good time for some personal "housecleaning." Galatians 5:16–21 tells us we need to "live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desire of the sinful nature." The sunlight of God's word brings into the open the sins we would otherwise keep hidden. We are human and so we sin daily. By reading God's word we are made aware of our sin. Now is a good time to do some spiritual housecleaning. The Lord can help us clean out the "dirt and grime" and make us fresh and clean.

Are you looking forward to our annual conference? I am! The speaker for the WMS luncheon will be Jill Briscoe. I am sure she will be an exciting

*(continued on page 3)*

## PRAY? WHY NOT?

Devotions presented by Joanne Kroft
Ohio WMS District Conference, March 11, 1995

Text: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*
Philippians 4:6

I have had a sneak preview of the book *Prayers that are Answered* by Betty Malz, which may be on the reading list for next year. I say "may be," if it is available and if the WMS Executive Committee recommends it. I hope so, because it is a book everyone should read.

This book is dedicated to "everyone who has a prayer yet unanswered." Isn't that all of us?

Sometimes it takes a major need in our lives before we stop to pray. During the past year I have realized the shortcomings in my prayer life, and now I am dependent solely upon prayer continuously. As I have practiced praying, I have learned so much. I am like the disciples, "Lord, teach me to pray."

I have said to some, "I'll remember you in prayer" and then use prayer thoughts to keep them in mind. The attitude of prayer is part of the "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17) admonition. Although I am not with that person, I continue in God's Presence for that person.

In her book, Mrs. Malz reminds us there is power in prayer. And sometimes it takes a long time for the answer to come. But God's timing is not our timing! Frequently we tend to run ahead of God and do our own thing. The author prayed for a mate and it took six years for God to answer her. Although she had suitors, no one was the "perfect" one, until God's time was right! We know God could arrange events immediately, but more often He arranges other circumstances to be in order, according to His timing.

The author's recipe for a prayerful life is this:

(1) Pray early and often — throughout the day

(2) Prayer concentration — erase thoughts which interfere when I'm talking with God

(3) Forgive someone — forgive us our debts as we forgive

(4) Expect — but don't demand

(5) Be willing to wait — God's timing is always best.

God is concerned about our small needs as well as the major needs. Nothing is too trivial for Him.

The author of "What a Friend We have in Jesus" knew many of us! He knew that frequently we struggle in a dilemma. When all of our self-directed plans fail, then we seek God's help and the solution is clear. Wouldn't it be easier to ask God first? We practice the maxim, "When all else fails, read the directions." Not only do we have the directions, but we also have the direction-giver, God Himself.

"Oh what peace we often forfeit,
Oh what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."

Knowing that God can answer our prayers that we ask in His name requires trust. Think back to the account in I Chronicles 5, when an army of 44,760 men was able-bodied and trained for battle. They were capable and armed and yet they sought God's help: ". . . they cried out to him during the battle. He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him. . . . the battle was God's." We don't have to struggle or fight through each day; He is there to lead us. We need to ask in prayer and believe (Mark 11:24).

Many books and articles are written about this important subject, and so it should be. Each one is a strengthening tool for us. We need to ask, seek, and knock (Matthew 7:7). Let us enter into Christ's presence quietly and listen. "Be still and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10.)

# Thanks!

Dear Friends,

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

I wanted to take this time to express my heartfelt thanks for the scholarship I received on behalf of the Woman's Missionary Society. I must tell you right off that, if it were not for that contribution, I would have had a very hard time entering into my last year in school due to my financial situation. I was taken back when I was informed of the gift and I continue to praise God for providing for me.

I will graduate on May 13 from Ashland University with a degree in Religion and Music Performance. I will then serve as a Program Coordinator for Wooster Outdoors Center in Wooster, Ohio. Then, I will enter into Ashland Theological Seminary's Midwest Counseling Program for a M.A. in Pastoral Counseling.

I hope to return to my home in Tucson, Arizona, for a visit with my new nephew and niece (Matthew and Gabriela were born March 25). I have missed my large Mexican-American family very much and I greatly look forward to sharing my future plans with them. They have been very supportive in my personal quest of serving the Lord on a full-time basis and attaining my education in order to better equip myself to do so.

It will be hard to give up my position as Student Coordinator for H.O.P.E. Christian Fellowship, as well as my position as University Church board member. However, I feel that, if it were not for the many opportunities for me to serve in these and several other leadership roles, I would not be able to say that I have been faithful to the Lord's calling on my life to serve Him on an everyday basis.

I will close with the words of our awesome God:

" 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' " (Jeremiah 29:11)

I thank you for your contribution toward my future. I ask for your continued prayers as I continue on through Seminary and enter into full-time service in order to further God's kindgom.

"Peace to the Brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Because of Calvary,
Karen E. Robins

# In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

The Senior WMS at the Bethlehem, Virginia, Brethren Church lost our best friend and president, Mae Logan Wenger, when she passed away December 16, 1994. She was a "super" Christian lady and had played the organ at church for 82 years. She served almost every position in the church and Sisterhood, Signal Lights, and Christian Endeavor. She was president and vice president of the district WMS and always attended the meetings. We talked Thursday night, and the next morning she was with the Lord—she and the Lord worked that out perfectly! Plans for memorial gifts include automatic chimes and a brass plaque in the church.

*(This note was signed by Ellen Logan, Anna Lambert, and Neva Waggy.)*

# District Doings

Eileen Higgins reported from the SARASOTA Evening WMS: They currently are planning their Mother and Daughter banquet in May and the public service program. With the Day society, they sponsored the World Day of Prayer program March 1.

Fundraisers were selling Avon products, then buying a mixer for the kitchen with the proceeds and, with the Day ladies, contributing articles to a consignment shop. That profit was designated for the church's new carpet.

The OHIO ladies elected officers at the district conference in March. Wanda Powell is the new president. Make the change in the January–February *Newsletter*, which is the WMS directory. Wanda lives at 9 Oakwood, Beloit, Ohio 44609. Her telephone number is 216-938-3291.



## Prayer Poem Wins National Recognition

Roxie Stahl, a member of the HUNTINGTON Brethren Church and WMS, received the 1994 Editor's Choice Award from the National Library of Poetry for her poem, "For This I Pray." The judges placed her poem among the best three percent of all contest entries, and it is published in the anthology *Outstanding Poets of 1994.*

Roxie is pleased to have her poem reprinted in the *Newsletter.* It is one means of her witness, and may you find a renewed spiritual strength.

### *For This I Pray*

Jesus, Light of Heaven,
Enter Thou my soul;
Quicken Thou my spirit,
Cleanse me, make me whole.

Search me, try me, Jesus;
Bend me to Thy will,
Temper my impurities
Make me meek and still.

Teach me, Jesus, teach me
All that I must know —
Of duty, faith, and charity,
My life — Thy love to show.

Love me, Jesus, love me,
When I Thy Spirit grieve,
Help me, Jesus, help me
To live as I believe.

For I believe in Thee, Lord;
Heaven is my goal.
Jesus, Light of Heaven,
Enter Thou my soul.

THE WOMAN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Woman's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

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Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

# Missionary Miscellany

Hello from STAKE,*

Enclosed is the list of Tentmakers' addresses, birth dates, and phone numbers. We wanted to send an update for you. We are getting set to begin a second "cell" group. Please keep us in your prayers. We look forward to getting news from other Brethren.

Come down for a visit as well.

Vanda Funkhouser (3/16)
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Kristin (2/19)
Kenton (5/20)

Linda Yoder (11/4) 407-348-2539
137 B Jones Lane
Kissimmee FL 34743
Jeff (1/24)
Joshua (3/10)

God Bless You.

**STAKE stands for Saturation of the Target Area for Kingdom Extension*

The Northern California District and the Missionary Board have begun a project to start a number of new churches in Northern California. Archie Nevins and his family will move to that area in August to coordinate this ministry. Pray for them as they relocate and for the Springboro congregation during this transition.

Continue your prayers for Reilly and Cindy Smith. Reilly is the new Executive Director of the Missionary Board and began learning his new responsibilities in April. He and Jim traveled to India and Malaysia in January and February, and then to Mexico in April. Reilly's family is staying in Mulvane, Kansas, until the end of the school year, so pray for them and the Mulvane congregation as they search for a new pastor.

Missionaries-of-the-Month (May) are Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar and their son, Sudhir, in India, and David and Jenny Loi, and their children, Stephen and Rebecca, in Malaysia. Jim and Reilly have articles, reports, and pictures of these families. Watch for current information in *The Brethren Evangelist*, at conferences, and when someone visits your church.

The June missionaries-of-the-month are home missions families: Jim and Ann Miller with Bryan, Luke, Annie, and David in Carmel, Indiana, and Tom and Tiona Conrad in Greenwood, Indiana. The Carmel congregation is self-supporting; the Greenwood fellowship is young. Both congregations need and appreciate your prayers.



## The President's Pen

*(continued from page 1)*

speaker and you won't want to miss hearing her. We will have two (maybe three) business sessions, when we will have elections, hear reports, and make some changes in the WMS Constitution.

This is the time of year for the Mother-Daughter banquests or Ladies banquets, whatever your church calls them. Please write to Joan Ronk and let her know what is happening in your church. This makes excellent reading for all ladies of The Brethren Church and might give ideas to someone planning just such a banquet. I always look forward to seeing what other groups are doing, and I am sure many others feel as I do.

My love to each of you, and let's get busy on our Spring-Cleaning—in our homes and in our lives. God bless each of you.

In Christian Love,
Shirley Black

# Good News!

The FREMONT Society is revitalized! The duo-pastors' wives, Marcia Miller and Judy McLaughlin, are the organizers of the Woman's Missionary Society. In December, for their first meeting, four ladies attended. In January their attendance doubled to eight and in February there were twelve! No wonder they are excited—their group includes younger girls and older ladies. Their dues are adjusted to cover those who may not be able to pay the usual amount. The National WMS provided literature for them, as is the policy in the first year for new societies. We give thanks for their prayers and planning, and now for their presence among the Woman's Missionary Societies. They desire to support the ministries of The Brethren Church through WMS.

We see their organization—including younger ladies—as an ideal example of mentoring. This is Commitment 10 in action!

**LOOK!**

## SEE THIS

On my daily calendar for April 1:

Spring cleaning should begin with the head and end with the heart.

— Anon.

GENERAL CONFERENCE
August 7–11, 1995
Ashland, Ohio

WMS PROJECT
1994–95
FUNDS for TRAINING
MALAYSIAN PASTORS
(second year)

THANK OFFERING
DESIGNATED
FOR BENEVOLENCES



# HERE'S AN IDEA!

For the public service in HUNTINGTON March 5, Judy Eckerley of the Mishawaka Brethren Church presented a challenging and inspiring message entitled "The God Who is Big Enough." Basing her message on Numbers 13 and 14, Judy told of the Israelites' experiences with the giants of Canaan, then compared our own mistakes with theirs. Roxie Stahl reports some of Judy's thoughts:

"Do we believe that the God who has brought us this far is big enough to handle what we are facing now?

"Often we direct our attention to the problem and not to God; then the problem gets bigger and Bigger, and BIGGER!

"Ask yourself, 'How big is my God? Do I need to firm up?' There is a big difference between pride, arrogance, and confidence."

Judy reminded the congregation of the rebellion and grumblings of the Israelites against God (Numbers 14) and stated that "Grumbling spreads. It defeats us."

"Are you facing a giant? You have two choices. Run from it or choose to believe that, whatever giant is in your life, God can handle it. Give Him the giants!"

Participants in the service were Marjorie Teusch, Pat Lusch, Roxie Stahl, Helen Dickson, Judy Lee, Peg Stahl, Carol Tucker, and Olive Teusch. A trio of Wanda Armantrout, Ruth Keplinger, and Pat Lusch sang; pianist was Rick Forrester and organist was Lois Fox.

For the ASHLAND Park Street public service, Dr. and Mrs. Ron Sprunger presented a service of Heartfelt Worship February 12. Laura May Riffle and Gaylene Kennelly reported that it truly was heartfelt. It was a worshipful time in word, drama, and music.

The Sprungers and a male ensemble from the Seminary led us as worshipers to experience the presence of God in our hearts. The progression and the flow of beautiful music, blended with some words, deepened our beliefs in our great God.

Martin Luther, in a dialogue, came to tell us how important it was for us to give thanks, to praise, and to rejoice in song. This was emphasized with the men singing the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." In another dialogue, we were taken down the road to the Woman at the Well talking with Jesus about the Living Water. We looked inward to see if we had taken just a sip or if we had taken fully of what is offered. Since we are to sing and make a joyful song to the Lord, we raised our voices and sang to Him who loves unquestionably! The beautiful words of the hymns and I Am Jesus choruses sung by the men and the congregation blended with the organ and piano music by the Sprungers. We felt His presence as He touched us in our time of worship. It was a meaningful experience for all of us who absorbed and contemplated all He is and all He ever will be.

An enjoyable fellowship hour followed. The tables were laden with heart cookies, continuing the heart/valentine theme.

## SEWING UPDATE

Joan Merrill is excited about the "quilt" items that are planned for the auction at General Conference. Plans so far include a comforter made from the sheet that the children created last year at the Kids' Konference, a pieced pillow, a vest, an apron, and probably a few tote bags. As of now, we won't be quilting at Conference.

If you plan to send quilt squares, the guidelines are in the November–December 1994 *Outlook Newsletter.*

## The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

If you think there is an emphasis on prayer in this Newsletter, you are correct. I see an urgency in prayer, as Joanne Kroft alluded to in her devotions. Not that we wait for major dilemmas, but the circumstances of our country and ourselves merit out total dependence upon God. Participating in the National Day of Prayer in May is only the beginning of returning our country to God. That is a huge project, but it begins with me.

In my comfy rocking chair, I read *Deborah* by James Shott, one of our reading circle books. This is a novel, based on the Scriptures, about Deborah, the first female judge of Israel. The uppermost theme was her total dependence upon God and, consequently, how she saved the nation of Israel.

We women, bonded together, can accomplish great things, also. The specific needs of our missionaries, the denominational interests, plans for General Conference and the auxiliary meetings—all need advanced prayer with their plans. Specifically pray for the WMS Executive Board in their May meeting, that their plans and decisions will be God's will.

Your prayer list is unique, just as mine. This week I crossed off the needs of one family who needed to sell their house and relocate, another family whose plans changed and needed to cancel their house plans, the pain—literally in the neck—which doesn't go away, successful surgery, safe traveling for several. It's a joy to acknowledge God's love and care! Almost daily I add a concern to share with the Lord and, when the answer comes, I say a thank-you prayer. God is faithful.

Send your prayers and encouragement cards to the new WMS in Fremont to the church address: 216 S. Park Avenue, Box 574, Fremont, OH 43420. We will look for the Fremont delegates at General Conference.

A few societies have reported on their Commitment 10: to encourage and nurture the girls and young women in their church. Ideas are mentoring (meeting regularly in a one-on-one setting, then talking, listening, and praying together); inviting them to a special meeting (Christmas, Mother-Daughter activities); secret sister/pal/friend, and revealing the names at a summer party. Do you have another idea?

As your society compiles activities for the year, list your ideas to be sent to the general secretary. I will include them in future issues.

The WMS luncheon will be Wednesday, August 9. Jill Briscoe will be the featured speaker. Plan to attend!

When the WMS Executive Committee meets in May, suggested reading circle books will be chosen. I will send a listing to your president, although the books will be listed in the July–August Newsletter. By receiving the information early, your decisions can be made before your delegates come to Conference.

Your friend,

Joan

Joan

Mrs. María Miranda, and Rev. Ronald W. Waters.

One of the highlights of the convention was the closing banquet, at which retiring Executive Director Billy A. Melvin was honored for his 28 years as head of NAE.

The "Leadership Sessions" at the convention were devoted to "An Evangelical Response to Racism," a topic related to the convention theme. Speakers for these two sessions were Jack W. Hayford, pastor of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, Calif.; and Ronald Potter, assistant professor of Christian Thought and Contemporary Culture at the Center for Urban Theological Studies in Philadelphia, Pa.

David Rambo, president of NAE, outlined five specific objectives for the association in his presidential address to the convention, namely: addressing the need for racial reconciliation; increasing the participation of women in NAE; acknowledging the need for younger leadership in the association; welcoming into NAE more parachurch organizations and megachurches; and centering NAE's efforts on the re-evangelization of America. He also paid tribute to retiring Executive Director Billy A. Melvin, stating that "NAE's success, humanly speaking, cannot be explained apart from this dedicated man and his wife."

***NAE Resolution***

### Compassion for Immigrants and Refugees

As Christians, we are called to joyfully share our faith and hope with all people. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are guided by love. The Bible repeatedly declares God's love and care for all people, and requires that "The same law shall apply to the native-born as to the alien living among you" (Exod. 12:49). Similarly, "You are to have the same law for the alien and the native-born. I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 24:22).

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) is deeply concerned by a growing spirit of hostility towards immigrants and refugees who have become residents in our communities. While we recognize that some of our constituency feel strongly concerning issues of justice and law, we are all compelled by the love of Christ to act with compassion to our neighbors. Therefore, we pledge to eliminate the spirit of racism in any of our responses. While we recognize the right of nations to regulate their borders, we believe this responsibility should be exercised with a concern for the entire human family in a spirit of generosity and compassion (Deut. 10:19, Leviticus 19:34).

Furthermore, we acknowledge that immigrants and refugees contribute much to the continuing strength and vitality of local communities and our country by their commitment to work, education, and the family.

We call upon our government, therefore, to maintain reasonable and just admissions policies for refugees and immigrants. As evangelicals responsible to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:39), we are called to show personal and corporate hospitality to those who seek a new life in our nation.

Darlene Melvin, wife of Dr. Billy Melvin, also received special recognition at the convention. She was presented World Relief Corporation's 16th annual Helping Hands Award, given annually to an individual who best exemplifies a spirit of dedication to serving the needs of the world's poor and homeless. Mrs. Melvin was recognized "for a life devoted to quiet and consistent acts of compassion to the less fortunate through her church." Mrs. Melvin was pivotal in forming an English language training program for refugees in Wheaton, Ill. She also adopted many refugee families and reached out as well to handicapped widows and single women.

NAE's 1995 Layperson of the Year Award went to JoAnne Jankowski, who was honored for "demonstrating a deep loyalty and commitment to a wide variety of Christian activities and especially to the National Association of Evangelicals." Mrs. Jankowski, who is a lawyer, serves as a member of NAE's Board of Administration and on the executive committee. She and her husband publish the *EP News Service* and the *Minnesota Christian Chronicle*.

Kenneth R. Taylor, founder and chairman of the board of Tyndale House Publishers, was presented the James DeForest Murch Award for his excellence of editing skills and his leadership in evangelical publishing. He is probably best known for his paraphrase of Scripture—*The Living Bible*.

At the convention business session two resolutions—"Compassion for Immigrants and Refugees" and "U.S. Foreign Aid and Humanitarian Assistance" (*printed on this page*) —were adopted, in addition to the position paper mentioned above. [⇧]

***NAE Resolution***

### U.S. Foreign Aid and Humanitarian Assistance

With the end of the Cold War and the need to reduce the Federal budget, U.S. foreign aid commitments are under congressional review. The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) understands the need for this review and welcomes any effort to eliminate waste, corruption and misuse of funds. We support ongoing efforts in the Congress to restructure USAID, and other international humanitarian organizations, so that those involved in administering foreign aid funds are held accountable.

We support efforts to focus U.S. foreign aid on such programs as microenterprise development and child survival that have demonstrated the ability to make a real difference in the lives of those in need. We encourage the utilization of private, voluntary organizations, such as our own World Relief Corporation, which can supplement U.S. government funds with support from private donors, operate with minimal overhead, and work effectively to bring hope to people at the local level.

We strongly believe that any review of the U.S. foreign aid budget should safeguard our country's benevolence to those in desperate need. Although our country cannot solve all of the world's problems, our foreign aid should be available to care for victims of war and disaster, reduce chronic poverty, and assist with health care for those exposed to preventable illnesses.

We urge the U.S. Congress, therefore, to approve foreign aid budgets that will protect and strengthen our nation's long-standing tradition of humanitarian concern and bring hope to those who are displaced, hungry, and in need.

# 1995 Brethren Church Summer Ministries

## District Crusaders

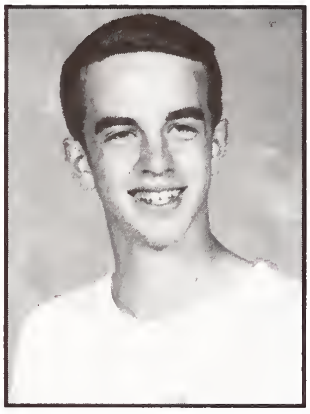
THREE DISTRICTS will be participating in the 1995 District Crusader program. Fielding teams this summer will be the Pennsylvania, Central, and Southeastern Districts.

Young people serving in the District Crusader program are those who have completed the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade of high school. District Crusaders serve within their own districts.

### Pennsylvania District Crusaders

Four young people will be serving as Pennsylvania District Crusaders this summer. All four are first-year Crusaders.

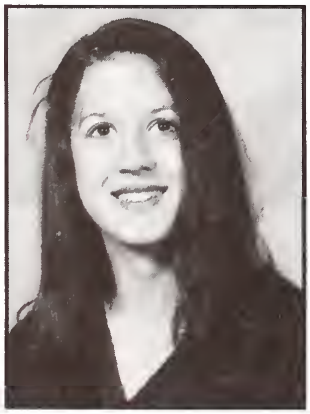
Jeremy Tarr, from the Brush Valley Brethren Church in Adrian, Pennsylvania, will serve as the team captain. Erin Leidy of Conemaugh, Monica Hoffman from Berlin, and Michelle Rosie from Masontown are the other members of the team.



*Jeremy Tarr*



*Erin Leidy*



*Michelle Rosie*

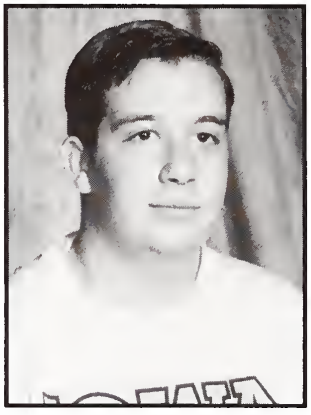


*Monica Hoffman*

This team will work with two different vacation Bible schools, one at the Wayne Heights Brethren Church in Waynesboro, Pa., and the other at the First Brethren Church in Cameron, West Virginia. They will also work with the Pennsylvania Junior Camp and assist with various activities at the Pennsylvania District Youth Conference in July.

### Central District Crusaders

This is the first summer that the Central District is fielding a District Crusader team. Two young men—Aaron Hollewell and Brad Linboom, both of whom are from the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church—will make up this team.



*Brad Linboom*



*Aaron Hollewell*

Aaron and Brad will serve for three weeks. They will spend one week at the Central District camp and two weeks working with vacation Bible school, serving one week each at the Lanark and Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Churches.

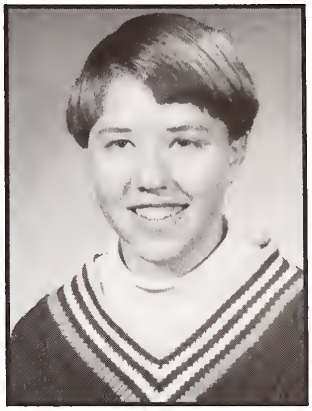
### Southeastern District Crusaders

The Southeastern District will field two Crusader teams this summer. Team 1 will be comprised of three members. Jenna Bowen, a second-year Crusader, will serve as captain. Jenna is a member of the Oak Hill, West Virginia, First Brethren Church. The other two team members, who are first-year Crusaders, are Laurie Baker from the St. James, Maryland, Brethren Church, and Missy Allen from the Oak Hill First Brethren Church. This team will serve at the Southeastern Middler camp and with the Krypton Brethren Church vacation Bible school in Krypton, Kentucky. (*Pictures on next page.*)



*Jenna Bowen*

Team 2 is comprised of three first-year Crusaders. Rachel Pennington of the Oak Hill First Brethren Church will serve as team captain. Serving with her will be Jennifer Maginnis from the St. James Brethren Church as well as Jason Crouch, also from the Oak Hill First Brethren Church. This team will work with the Southeastern Middler camp and also spend a week working with vacation Bible school at the Hagerstown, Maryland, First Brethren Church. [⇧]



*Rachel Pennington*



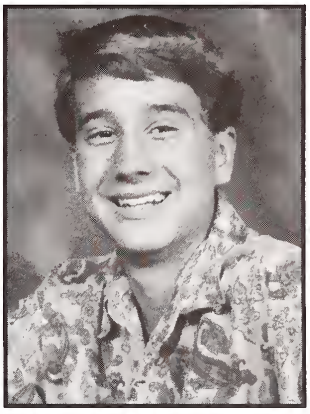
*Laurie Baker*



*Missy Allen*



*Jennifer Maginnis*



*Jason Crouch*

# Short-Term Missions Trip to Mexico



A TEAM of seven young people will be participating in a short-term missions trip to Mexico in June.

Leading the team will be Jennifer Thomas, one of the co-leaders of last year's mission trip to Mexico. Jen is a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio, and has been working with the youth at the First Brethren Church in Louisville, Ohio. Assisting Jen in leading the team will be Ed Strickland, who attends the University Church in Ashland, Ohio.

Five young women will make up the rest of the team. Members of last year's team who are returning for their second summer are Michelle Mathews from the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church; Christina Godefrin from the Sarasota, Fla., First Brethren Church; and Amber Corbitt from the Waterbrook Brethren Church in Edinburg, Virginia.

First-year members of the team are Jackie Shipman from the Ardmore Brethren Church in South Bend, Indiana; and Stefanie Grindle from the First Brethren Church in Wabash, Indiana.

The team will serve one week in Juarez, Mexico. [⇧]

# 1995 Brethren Church Summer Ministries

## Young Adult Ministries

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES (YAM) is replacing the traditional Summer Crusader and Crusader Internship programs in 1995. Those who applied to serve in this ministry experience completed an extensive application in which they indicated their particular gifts, the types of ministry experience in which they were interested, and their vocational objectives.

For those applicants who were accepted, ministry locations were chosen to match as closely as possible the developmental needs of each individual. Terms of service will be a minimum of five weeks in one location.

Five young adults will be serving in the 1995 program.



*Kayleen Gibson*

### Kayleen Gibson

Kayleen graduates this spring from Ashland High School and plans to attend Mt. Vernon (Ohio) Nazarene College in the fall. She will serve this summer as a full-time staff member at Camp Bethany. Kayleen attends the Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland and served the past two summers as captain of the Ohio District Crusader teams.



*Andrew Crum*

### Andrew Crum

Andrew is a member of the First Brethren Church in Burlington, Ind. He is a 1995 graduate of Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., and previously served one year on a Summer Crusader team and one year as a Crusader Intern. Andrew will serve this summer at the First Brethren Church in Peru, Ind., in the area of pastoral ministry.

### Jaime Gillespie

Jaime is a member of the Vinco Brethren Church, Mineral Point, Pa. A 1995 high school graduate, she plans to attend Ashland University this fall. She served the past two summers on the Pennsylvania District Crusader team, last year as team captain. This summer she will serve with the Southwest District camping program in Arizona.



*Jaime Gillespie*

### Chris Diehl

Chris will spend his summer serving in the area of pastoral ministry at the Gretna Brethren Church near Bellefontaine, Ohio. This will be his second summer serving with this congregation. He is a member of the Fairless Hills-Levittown Brethren Church in Levittown, Pa., and a 1995 graduate of Philadelphia College of The Bible.



*Chris Diehl*



*Christy Van Duyne*

### Christy Van Duyne

Christy will serve at the Brethren Retreat Center in Shipshewana, Indiana, this summer as Activity Director in the areas of music and drama. She is a member of the Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio, and will graduate from Ashland High School this spring. She plans to attend Grace College in Winona Lake, Ind., in the fall. [⇧]

## Goshen Church Surprises Pastor Donald Rowser With Celebration of His 10 Years at the Church

**Goshen, Ind.** — An air of excitement permeated the filled sanctuary of the Goshen First Brethren Church on Sunday morning, March 26, as members and friends of the church prepared to honor Pastor Donald Rowser and his wife, Charlene, for their ten years of service to the congregation.

The service began as usual, with an invocation and time of praise. But following announcements, *much to Pastor Rowser's surprise,* the service was interrupted and the celebration began.

Each Sunday school class presented a tribute to the Rowsers. The Friendship Class give them "love notes" and a rose from each couple, forming a beautiful bouquet. The senior high class performed a skit on how "seeds" are nurtured by the church and grow into Christian young adults. Even the young children paraded down the aisle of the sanctuary to present flowers to the pastoral couple. In addition to the flowers, the Rowsers also received balloons, cards, a butterfly sanctuary, as well as a monetary gift from the congregation.

Special music was also a part of the celebration. The adult choir sang "Carry the Light"; the children's choir sang several numbers, including "We Are the Children"; and a men's quartet (Glenn Black, Trent Hostetler, Greg Pollock, and Jeff Parker) sang "Amazing Grace."

A video was shown which captured moments from the past, including those in which Pastor Rowser was the star. At the end of the video was a taped message of love from the Rowsers' son, David, and his family, who live in Texas and were unable to attend the celebration.

The service concluded with the reading of scripture and prayer by Associate Pastor Dave Kline. Following the service, a carry-in dinner was held.

Approximately 220 people attended the celebration, including the Rowsers' daughter, Tracy Whiteside, and her family; former associate pastors of the church who served with Pastor Rowser; numerous friends of the Rowsers; and, of course, members of the congregation. The celebration was planned by Cindy Hostetler, Betty Gray, and Sherry Condor.

*— reported by Anna Bollinger*



*The little children honor the Rowsers with flowers.* **Photo by Shelly Wilfong.**

## Commissioning Service Held For Clair Knappenberger, Jr.

**Vandergrift, Pa.** — Clair Knappenberger, Jr., was commissioned for pastoral ministry of the Sarver, Pa., Brethren Church in a special service held Sunday, March 5, at the Pleasant View Brethren Church.

The Pennsylvania District Board of Oversight approved Knappenberger for commissioning as pastor of the Sarver Church for 18 months. At the end of this period he will enter the pastoral ministry licensing program.

Rev. R. Keith Hensley, pastor of the Pleasant View Church, led the commissioning service, which was attended by Brethren from both the Sarver and the Pleasant View congregations. Deacons and deaconesses from both churches laid hands on Clair and his wife, Debbie, as they were commissioned. A fellowship dinner for Brethren from the two churches was held following the service.

Clair was born and raised in the Vandergrift area, where he became a member of the Pleasant View Brethren Church. He is employed as a machinist at Gentile Manufacturing Company of Hyde Park, Pa. Clair and Debbie have two daughters, Candice and Melissa.

*— reported by Nancy McGraw*



*Clair and Debbie Knappenberger and their daughters, Melissa (l.) and Candice.*



# Mt. Olive Brethren Honor the Areharts As Their Sweetheart Couple of the Year

**Pineville, Va.** — Jake and Georgie Arehart were honored as the Sweetheart Couple of the Year for 1995 at the annual Sweetheart Banquet held Sunday, February 12, at the Mount Olive Brethren Church.

The Areharts were honored during the course of the day with comments, a corsage and boutonniere, and a beautifully decorated cake (baked and decorated by Robin Cash). A special table was also prepared for them and their family at the banquet, with pictures from their years together displayed on the table.

Approximately 110 people attended the covered-dish banquet held in the attractively decorated fellowship hall. Following the meal, they returned to the sanctuary for a highly entertaining "Marriage Game." Four couples—Randy and Sheila Armentrout, Terry and Connie Comer, Brad and Lisa Morris, and Reggie and Weber Smith—were tested to see how well they knew their spouse. Questions ranged from "What is the name of the first restaurant to which your husband took you?" to "What is the oldest leftover in your refrigerator today?" It was a close contest, with Randy and Sheila pulling out a victory on the last question ("What is your husband's favorite season of the year?").



*Jake and Georgie Arehart (l.), Mt. Olive's Sweetheart Couple of the Year for 1995, with last year's Sweetheart Couple, Ellen and Henry Lineweaver.*

### Georgie and Jake Arehart

Georgie (Downs) and Jake were each one of 11 children in their respective families. During the late 1930s, Georgie worked with Jake's sisters, who then introduced the two around 1940. On May 22, 1943, Georgie and Jake were married.

For a number of years, Jake worked as a farmer, first for his father and later for J.W. Hinkle. For 28 years Georgie worked at the Pineville Service Station, "the most popular gathering place in Pineville!" Before retiring, Jake worked for Whitesel Brothers for 25 years, and he continues to work part time for Harrisonburg Auto Auction.

The Areharts have one daughter, Nancy (Layne), two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Georgie enjoys crocheting, embroidering, and baking, while Jake likes to grow flowers and vegetables. They have attended the Mt. Olive Brethren Church since the early 1950s, where Georgie taught Sunday school for 42 years and Jake served as trustee and usher.

*— excerpted from a bulletin insert prepared by Nancy Layne and Debbie Raynes*

## Pastor's Wife Victimized At 40th Birthday Party

**Vandergrift, Pa.** — Teresa Hensley, wife of the pastor of the Pleasant View Brethren Church, was the victim at a dinner and party held Sunday, April 9, to memorialize her fortieth birthday.

Teresa endured the good-natured jokes and gag gifts that reminded her of her advancing age, and a happy evening of laughter was enjoyed by all who attended the event, including Teresa.

The special evening, planned by the Woman's Missionary Society and the Fellowship Committee of the Pleasant View Church, was held to show Teresa how much her good sense of humor, her love and compassion, and her ministry within the Pleasant View Church have been appreciated during the past eleven years that she and her husband, Rev. Keith Hensley, have served the congregation.

*— reported by Nancy McGraw*



*Her husband, Rev. Keith Hensley, stands by with a fire extinguisher as Teresa prepares to blow out the candles on her birthday cakes.*

# Little Crusader

**Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).**

## Dear Boys and Girls,

May is the month that I look forward to the most of all the months of the year. In May I get to start planting seeds. I *love* to work outside in my garden. It's so much fun to watch the tiny seeds grow into big, beautiful plants.

Jesus told a story about a farmer who planted seeds. Some of the seed fell along the path, and birds came along and ate it. Some of the seed fell on rocks and started to grow. But the sun dried out the plants because they didn't have any roots. Other seed fell among thorns, which choked the plants as they grew. But some seed fell on good soil, and it grew and grew and grew. The plants became beautiful and had lots of grain.

Jesus said that we are like the seed in this story. If we hear about God but don't listen to His words and obey Him, then we are like the seed that falls on the rocks and among the thorns. We need to go to church and listen to God's word and learn more about Him. If we do this, we will be like the seed that falls on good soil. We will be able to tell others how wonderful God is. We will be just like a plant that produces much beautiful grain!

**The parable about the seed is found in Matthew 13:1–9 and 18–23.**

1. According to verse 23, how much "fruit" will we produce if we listen to and follow God's word? _____

_____




2. What are some things you can do to help God's seed in your life produce strong plants? Write your answers on the flower. (Example: read the Bible.)



# Ashland University Holds Groundbreaking For New Hawkins-Conard Student Center

**Ashland, Ohio** — It was a festive occasion on Friday afternoon, April 21, when faculty, staff, students, special guests, and friends of Ashland University gathered on the university campus to break ground for the new Hawkins-Conard Student Center.

AU President William Benz was in high spirits as he welcomed the crowd that attended, introduced the participants in the program, then donned cap and gown and put his hands to a horse-drawn plow and began "breaking ground." The horses were in high spirits as well, and President Benz had to practically run down the furrow to keep up with them, robe flowing behind him.

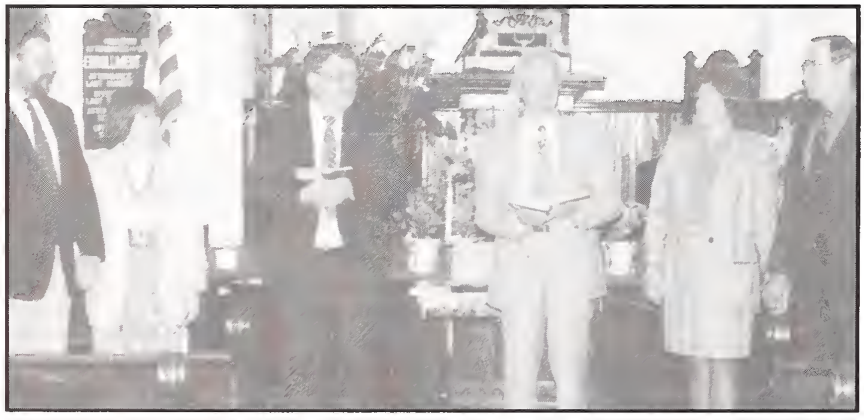
The use of horses and plow on this occasion hearkened back 68 years to a groundbreaking held on the campus in 1927, when then president Dr. Edwin Jacobs used this same method to break ground for a gymnasium. Following President Benz's "run," several other participants in the ceremony also took a turn with the horses and plow, including AU student Susan Boyd, president of the Student Senate; Harvey Young, chairman of the Ashland University Board of Trustees; and Eugene Ryan, chairman of the Conard Foundation. Prior to the plowing, these same people and several others had brought greetings during the more formal part of the groundbreaking ceremony. That program included an invocation by AU President Emeritus Dr. Glenn L. Clayton, who was president of the university when the idea for this student center was conceived; and a musical presentation by the Ashland University Choir. Following the use of the horses and plow to break ground, more ground was broken using the traditional shovel method, with various representatives of the university and Ashland communities taking part.



*Having completed his furrow, AU President Dr. William Benz looks on as Harvey Young, chairman of the AU Board of Trustees, puts his hands to the plow. Holding the reigns is Joe Reed, owner of the horses.*

The Hawkins-Conard Student Center is being named in recognition of Earl and Betty Hawkins, owners of several grocery stories in Ashland and nearby communities, who are contributing $1 million toward the cost of the building; and the Conard Foundation of Mansfield, for its commitment of $500,000 toward the building. Total cost of the Student Center is expected to be $6 million ($5 million for construction and $1 million for furnishings and equipment). More than $3 million has already been raised in gifts and pledges.

The 54,000-square-foot, two-story building will house offices for various student services, a bookstore, lounge, computer area, recreation center/game room, auditorium, meeting room, and kitchen. Construction will begin in May, with completion expected by the fall 1996 semester. The building will be located at "the point" formed by Claremont Avenue and King Road, with the foot bridge over Claremont Avenue joining the northwest side of the building.



***Linwood, Md.** — Wayne and Debra Lowman (l.) and Larry and Shirley Garber (r.) were ordained as deacons and deaconesses on Sunday, April 2, at the Linwood Brethren Church. The service was conducted by Rev. Richard Craver (3rd from left), Southeastern District Overseer for the Linwood Church, and Rev. Robert Keplinger, pastor of the congregation.*

*The Lowmans reside in Hanover, Pa., where Wayne is editor of the **Hanover Evening Sun**. He teaches Sunday school and sings in the church choir. Debra is assistant Sunday school superinendent. They have two children, Jed and Emma.*

*The Garbers reside in New Windsor, Md., and they own and operate Garber's Service in New Windsor. Larry is steward chairman and active in Men of Mission. Shirley sings in the choir and formerly taught Sunday school. They have three children, Clare, Scott, and Sheila.* **Reported by Pastor Bob Keplinger**

## From The Grape Vine



**Christy Bechtel,** a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, has been awarded a $6,000 Presidential Scholarship by Ashland University. The Presidential Scholarship is presented to incoming AU freshmen and transfer students on the basis of their high school grade point average and ACT/SAT scores. Christy is a senior at Northwestern High School, where she is president of her class, co-editor of the yearbook sports section, and a second year member of National Honor Society.

**The Carpenter's Shop,** the Brethren bookstore in Ashland, Ohio, had a good year financially in 1994. As a result, the bookstore's directors took action at the April 5, 1995, board meeting to underwrite several projects that will benefit The Brethren Church. The Carpenter's Shop will again purchase the date books that are distributed to Brethren pastors and other Brethren elders. In addition, up to $1,000 was designated to help underwrite the 1996 Brethren Pastors Retreat ($500 was designated last year for this year's retreat); and a donation of $2,500 will be made toward the video series on Brethren history and doctrine that is being done by The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication. The board of directors also declared a dividend of $10 per share on the company's stock. The 300 shares of stock are all owned by The Brethren Church. The Carpenter's Shop will also be giving 20 percent discount coupons for purchases at the bookstore to those who attend the 1995 General Conference.

**John Maust,** former member of the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church and for several years contributor of the "Developing a Global Vision" column in THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, became director of training for Media Associates International in Bloomingdale, Ill., at the beginning of April. Mr. Maust formerly served as a missionary with Latin America Mission and for the last eight years as editor of that mission's *Latin America Evangelist* magazine.

Ωmega, the drama ministry of the **Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church,** presented two special performances during the Easter season. On Good Friday, the drama team presented *The Hammer,* a dramatic presentation of the crucifixion, and during the SonRise service on Easter morning, the team performed *The Risen King.* Cheyenne member Shannon Cuthbert, who directs this ministry, wrote both dramas.

The **Ashland University Choir** will be on tour May 14–22. Much of the tour will be outside of Brethren areas, but the choir will give concerts at St. Stephen Martyr Lutheran Church in Canton, Ohio (4600 Fulton Dr. NW), at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 14; at the St. Barnabus Episcopal Church in Brackenridge, Pa. (Freeport & Morgan Sts.), at 7:30 p.m. on May 14; and at the **Linwood, Md., Brethren Church** at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 15. Brethren in these areas may wish to take advantage of an opportunity to hear Ashland University's excellent choir.


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### In Memory

**Kenneth Stephens,** 77, April 14. Faithful friend of the Hammond Avenue (Waterloo) Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Ronald L. Waters.

**Vivian McCann,** 83, April 11. Member for 69 years of the Hammond Avenue (Waterloo) Brethren Church, where she was also a member of the W.M.S. She was the mother of Brethren Elder Marlin McCann. Services by Pastor Ronald L. Waters.

**Eileen Curtiss,** 58, March 30. Member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Arden Gilmer.

**Kathy Whitted,** 50, March 30. Member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church. Kathy was injured in an automobile accident in August 1964 and had been in an unconscious state since that time. Services by Pastor Arden E. Gilmer.

**Irma Mounger,** 90, March 16. Longtime member of the Lanark First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Jim Garrett.

**Melvin Traum,** 76, March 16. Longtime member of the Lanark First Brethren Church. Services by Associate Pastor Robert Schubert

**Helene Ohrt,** 78, March 15. Member for 61 years of the Hammond Avenue (Waterloo) Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Ronald L. Waters.

### Weddings

**Amanda Thomas** to **Deryck Lees,** April 8, at the Loree Brethren Church; Pastor Jim Thomas officiating. Bride a member of the Loree Brethren Church.

**Julie Hammond** to **Gregg Reed,** February 18, at the Flora First Brethren Church; Pastor Brian Bolinger officiating. Bride a member of the Flora First Brethren Church.

**Carla Kay Erbsen** to **Jonathan Todd Mickey,** December 17, at the Lanark First Brethren Church; Pastor James Garrett officiating. Bride a member of the Lanark First Brethren Church.

### Goldenaires

**Paul and Margaret Miller,** 65th, May 7. Members of the Hammond Avenue (Waterloo) Brethren Church.

**Mr. & Mrs. Roscoe Connor,** 75th, April 21. Members (Mr. Connor a charter member) of the Johnstown Third Brethren Church.

### Membership Growth

**Flora:** 1 by transfer

**Lanark:** 4 by baptism

**Pleasant View:** 1 by baptism

**Falls City:** 6 by baptism, 2 by transfer

# *Summer Ministries:*
# Training Leaders

Since the 1940s, hundreds of Brethren Church leaders have received training through the Crusader Program. These leaders today are serving as pastors, seminary professors, Christian education directors, denominational executives, overseas missionaries, home mission and church planting pastors, and lay leaders of local churches. In fact, many first heard their call to vocational ministry while serving as an Ambassador, Summer Crusader, Crusader Intern, or District Crusader.



*Some of the many Brethren who have participated in the summer ministries programs of The Brethren Church over the years gathered for a reunion at last year's General Conference.*

This summer, 24 Brethren youth and young adults (see pages 12–14) will experience an intensive time of summer ministry that will contribute to the development of leadership skills—skills they can use now in their local youth groups, high schools, and colleges; and skills they can use in future ministry.

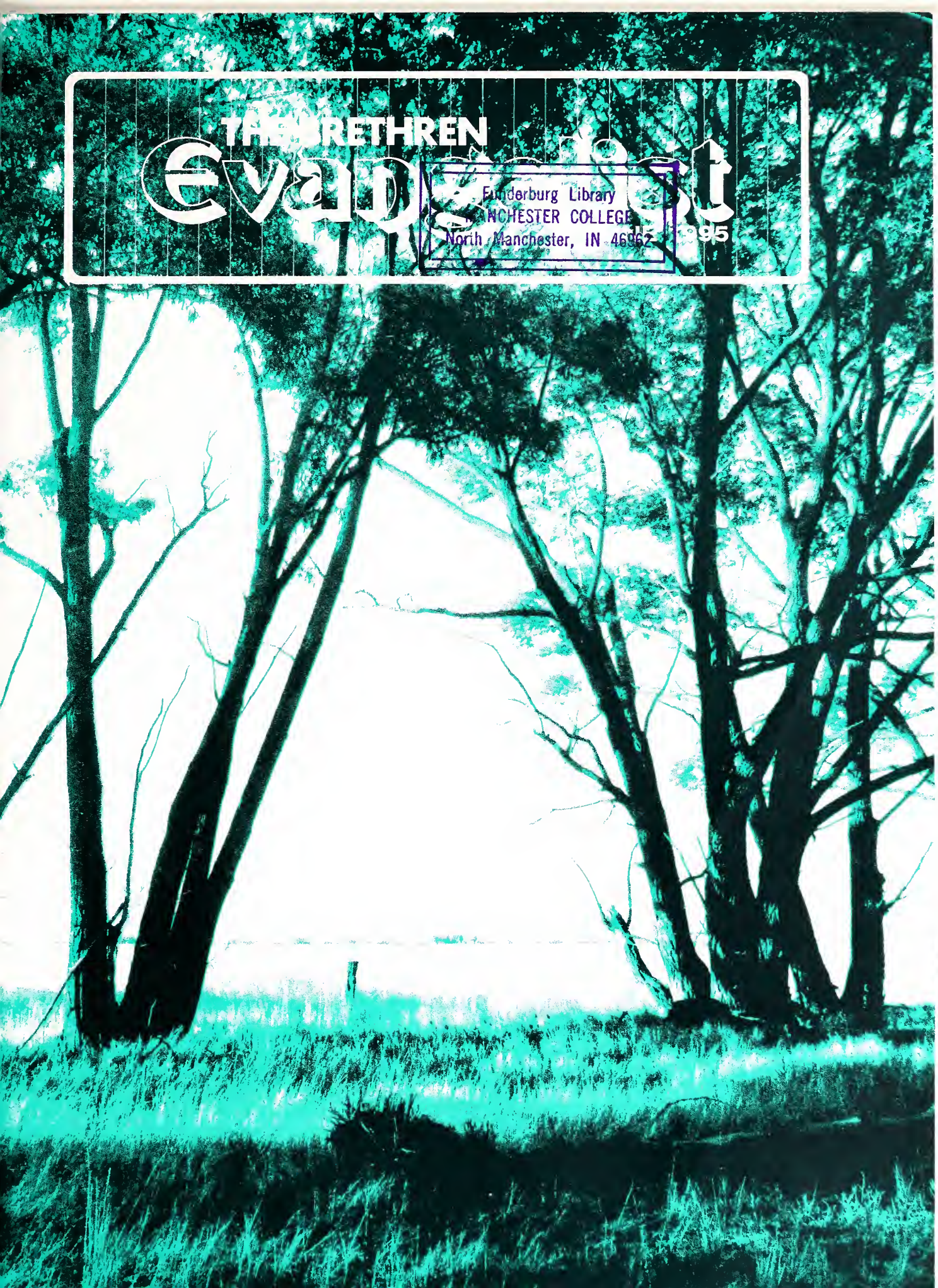
*You can help in two ways.* **First**, by praying for one or more of these young people. Pray that God will speak to them in a special way about his call to them for ministry. And pray that they will be sensitive each day to God's direction in their summer ministry.

And, **second**, you can help by providing financial support for the 1995 Brethren Church Summer Ministries program. **Your gift this month, be it large or small, will make possible this life-changing experience for these young people.**

*Thank you in advance for your support. Send your gift marked "Summer Ministries" to:*

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# The Aliens Among Us

By Richard C. Winfield, Editor

WHAT DO these people—Peter Jennings, television news anchorman; Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations; Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, physician/author; Angela Lansbury, actress; Sidney Poitier, actor; Patrick Ewing, basketball player; Andre Previn, pianist/conductor/composer—all have in common? In addition to being well known, they are all first-generation immigrants who left their homelands to reside in the United States.

## A hot topic

Immigration has become a hot topic in the last couple of years, due in part to the publicity generated by California's Proposition 187, which attempted to prohibit illegal aliens from receiving government-funded benefits, such as education and medical care.

But immigration is not a new issue. Benjamin Franklin, one of our nation's Founding Fathers, wrote: "Why should the Palatine *Boors* [German immigrants] be suffered to swarm into our Settlements, and by herding together, establish their language and Manners to the Exclusion of ours? Why should *Pennsylvania*, founded by the *English*, become a Colony of *Aliens*."*

Franklin's concerns are some of the same ones raised today—the great number of immigrants, that they live in cultural enclaves, that they continue to speak their own language rather than English. Missing from Franklin's concerns, at least in this quotation, are today's allegations that immigrants take jobs from other Americans and abuse welfare services.

It should be of interest to us that early Brethren would have been among that group about whom Franklin was concerned. The great majority of the early Brethren were natives of the Palatinate ("Palatine *Boors*"); many of them came to America; and a number of them settled in Germantown in Franklin's home town of Philadelphia, where they continued to use their own language. In fact, the language shift from German to English in the *German* Baptist Brethren Church was not completed until about the middle of the 19th century. Yet most members of The Brethren Church today would consider themselves about as mainstream American as they come.

The immigration debate involves many complex political, economic, and cultural issues that are far beyond the scope of this brief editorial. I would, however, point out a few Christian responsibilities.

## Get the facts

First, if we are going to engage in serious discussion about immigration, then we need to get the facts. We must not base our arguments on prejudice, emotion, and self-centeredness. And we need to beware of the hate-mongers who spread myths and half-truths.

A good place to start getting the facts is the *Christianity Today* article by Tim Stafford quoted earlier. Another source of factual information is the National Immigration Forum, 220 I Street, NE #220, Washington, D.C. 20002-4362.

Second, as Christians, we have an obligation to love those who come to our country. The Israelites were told: "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens* in Egypt. I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:33, 34; *NIV*).

As Christians, can we do less? Even if we perceive immigrants in some way as a threat to our well-being, we are nevertheless to love them, for we are commanded to love even our enemies. So while others may look at this issue from a self-centered and ethnocentric point of view, we as Christians must be concerned about the well-being of immigrants as well as the well-being of ourselves and our country.

## The world at our doorstep

Third, immigration brings the world to our doorsteps. The Great Commission charges us to make disciples of all peoples. We have the opportunity to reach some of those people without leaving our own land. And what an opportunity it is!

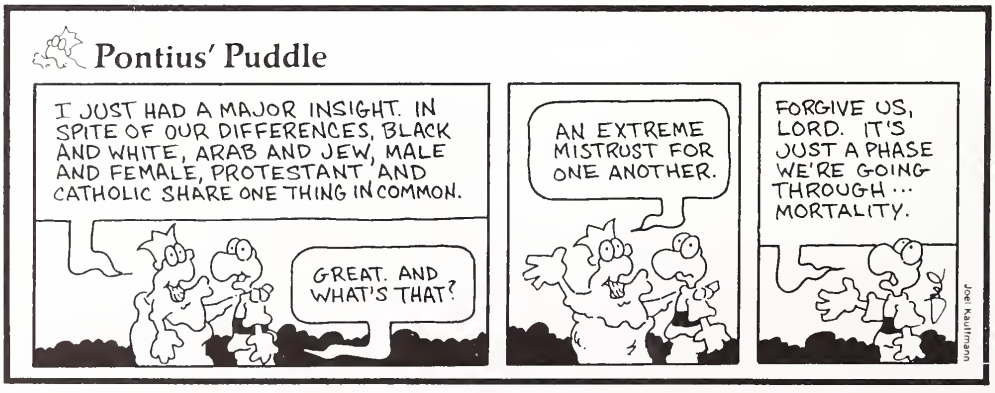
It is a well-known fact of church growth that people are often most open to the gospel during times of major transition in their lives. Few transitions are greater than moving to a new land and culture. It is not surprising, then, that many immigrants are open to the gospel.

Furthermore, many of those who immigrate to the U.S. come from countries where missionaries have not been welcomed (China, Vietnam, Cuba, the former Soviet Union). Since we could not go to them, God has brought them to us. But the opportunity is even greater than this. Those who come to the U.S. retain contact with family and friends in their own countries. If we can evangelize those who come to our country, we also have the potential, through them, of reaching many more in their homelands.

In the Book of Revelation John foresees a time when an uncountable multitude *from every nation, tribe, people, and language* will stand before the throne of God in worship. We who plan to be among that international, interracial, intercultural group in heaven ought to get prepared by opening our arms and hearts to that same group here on earth. [⇧]

*Quoted in the May 15, 1995, issue of *Christianity Today* (p. 20) in "Here Comes the World" by Tim Stafford, an article on the immigration debate that is well worth reading.

*Remember, as Brethren *our* spiritual ancestors were also once aliens—in America!



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**Answers to the Little Crusader page:**

1. OBEY
2. RESPECT
3. LOVE
4. HONOR
5. EARTHLY FATHER
6. HEAVENLY FATHER
7. You could have written any one of the following references: Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Matthew 15:4; 19:19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; Luke 18:20; Ephesians 6:2.

# Regaining the Pioneering Spirit

By Larry Bolinger





JESUS, in John 4:35, calls to His disciples' attention the fields that are ready for harvest. The location was the town of Sychar in the hills of Samaria, at the place of Jacob's well. Dreaded Samaria! The Jews hated and feared the Samaritans because they had intermarried with foreigners and no longer went to Jerusalem to worship.

This was a most unlikely place for a spiritual harvest. And to make matters worse, the first witness to the town was a woman of questionable character, who after talking to Jesus went into Sychar to tell the townspeople about "a man who told me everything I ever did"! What a strange plan of evangelization!

The disciples couldn't fathom what Jesus had done, let alone His words. A harvest here!

Jesus' time on earth was so short that He wasted none of it. He was always trying to expand the disciples' understanding of God's mighty power to work in the lives of individuals. So when Jesus spoke of the fields that were white unto harvest, He meant that that very day was a day in which to bring in a harvest. He intended to challenge them to respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus knew that these disciples would be called upon to do things they never dreamed of doing. They would be called upon to win the world for Christ! He also knew that despite their experiences, their faults, and their many fears, they would take on the challenge of spreading the good news of forgiveness of sin through faith in the shed blood of Christ to everyone—not just to Jews. What audacious faith Jesus had!

## A great opportunity

From a brief study of the demographics of 22 growing cities, I have discovered that more than five million people will be moving to new locations in the next five years, with all the attendant problems and adjustments involved in relocating. Probably no greater opportunity to plant new congregations has been given to church groups in this century. Perhaps not since the 19th century has opportunity reached such proportions that church groups have been forced to reach beyond any imaginable plan and look for God's help in responding to the challenge.

As the pioneers of the 1800s moved from their comfortable lifestyles to the unknown wilderness to the west, they discovered that even the most difficult tasks could be accomplished when they teamed up with their neighbors. The rigors of the pioneer life proved the power of Christian charity and made the resulting fellowship extremely attractive to the unbeliever. Those pioneers became the leaven that changed lives.

## Pioneers again needed

In this age of movement, with the stress it brings to families, pioneers are once again needed to prove in the crucible of everyday life that Jesus has the power to transform lives and to offer a new future. Pioneers for Christ are needed to look at the vast possibilities that confront all believers in this day of opportunity. Now is the time to prove our faith. Pioneers for Christ, **arise**!

Can we afford to overlook the possibilities that five million people offer the church? Does our lack of experience with such huge numbers excuse us from looking to the fields that are ripe unto harvest? It's true, the laborers are few, just as they were in the days of Christ. But can we just throw up our hands and tell God that we're not ready? Will there be any acceptable excuses as the Holy Spirit works in our midst to call out workers for the harvest? Do we believe the Apostle Paul, who wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Now is the day of salvation"?

Jesus has already issued the call to go into fields ready to harvest. Pioneers for Christ, ARISE! May God help us in our response to Christ's call. [✝]

---

*Rev. Bolinger, a former Brethren missionary to Nigeria, West Africa, now lives in Kissimmee, Florida.*

# Recruiting Workers For God's Harvest Field

By Eric Bargerhuff

*Then [Jesus] said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*
Matthew 9:37, 38; *NIV*

MANY HAVE READ this passage and have paid attention only to the first verse, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." They have used those words as a mandate for doing all the ministry themselves. Some think that if ministry is to be done properly, then it is "up to me." But this attitude deprives others who are called to serve of the opportunity to grow and to be obedient to the call of God.

What do I mean? Simply this: More people are called to serve in ministry in our churches than are actually doing ministry. We just need to find them. They often hide in the strangest places and appear to be the least likely of persons to serve in such a capacity. But they are out there. God wants them, and we need them.

## A passion to wash feet

That is what ministerial recruitment in The Brethren Church should be all about. If The Brethren Church is to grow spiritually and numerically in the next century, then we must have committed people with a passion to wash feet. What? Yes, wash feet. We must have people who are willing to do the kind of service Jesus modeled when he bowed down and washed His disciples' feet. We need people with a selfless, obedient, service-oriented lifestyle who remember that we have been crucified with Christ and therefore no longer live to ourselves but to Him.

## We need to model it

The point is, we cannot ask this of other people during our recruitment month if we ourselves are not modeling it. "Monkey see, monkey do" is not just a cliché. It is true. Two of the ways God is using to raise people up for service are our persistence in prayer and our lifestyle, which reflects the passionate heart of a Christian servant.

Where is ***our*** passion to serve? Are others noticing an excitement to serve the Lord in ***our*** lives? These are challenges to contemplate as we seek to recruit people for ministry. And they are the things that many young people—and older people as well—will look for as they seek to discover God's will for their lives. They are watching us, so we must model this desire to serve and make it contagious. Simply said, "If we lead, others will follow."

As we observe Ministerial Recruitment Sunday this June in The Brethren Church,* let us be reminded that every Sunday should be recruitment Sunday, *for recruitment must happen year around.* Making disciples and raising them up for service requires time and effort on our part. It is necessary for us to develop and nurture lasting and supportive relationships with those whom we feel may be called of God to serve. We must nurture them and show them the way.

This is a challenge for pastors and lay leaders to make disciples—disciples who are willing to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. We must not simply recruit now and then, but every day, for it is a matter of eternal life and eternal death. My prayer is that God will find us faithful in being and finding laborers for His harvest field. [✝]

*Mr. Bargerhuff is a Brethren student at Ashland Theological Seminary and serves as Associate Pastor of the University Church.*

*June is Ministerial Emphasis Month in The Brethren Church, and each year the first Sunday of June (June 4th this year) is designated as Ministerial Recruitment Sunday. June is also the month for emphasizing the Ministerial Student Aid Fund. This fund, administered by a committee of the National Association of Brethren Church Elders, is used to provide financial help to Brethren college and seminary students who are preparing for full-time Christian service in The Brethren Church.

### The Congregation's Role

For many years, Brethren congregations played an active role in calling men and women to ministry. But gradually over the years, congregations have taken a secondary role, allowing individuals to discern God's call on their own.

With the reawakening of the congregation's role in discerning gifts, a renewed sense of congregational responsibility for discerning God's calling to ministry is returning.

* * * * *

Our first goal should be to establish an effective, on-going, diligent prayer ministry for the specific needs of leadership in the local church, the district, the denomination, and the world missionary outreach.

. . . In the early church (Acts 14:32) and throughout early Brethren history, there was specific fasting and prayer for the sole purpose of providing the needed leadership for the church.

We also need to pray for those who have been called and who are in various stages of preparation for ministry. Men and women in preparation for ministry are prime targets for satanic attack, and we should be militantly in prayer on their behalf.

*— from the booklet **Understanding God's Call**, developed by the Vocational Ministry Development Task Force of The Brethren Church.*



Understanding the Bible

# The People of God

By Dale R. Stoffer

THOSE WHO SEEK to understand scripture in a systematic way generally propose some biblical theme or concept that serves as the focal point for their theology. Some theologians, for example, have emphasized God's sovereignty, while others have stressed human responsibility. Some have started with an aspect of human experience or existence, while others have developed their theology around the theme of liberation.

All of these theological starting points need to be judged on the basis of how well they represent the whole of scripture, or—as one of my professors used to say—how well they string all the beads of scripture. If important concepts in scripture are overlooked or distorted, that theological view should rightly be questioned.

Another way to approach this search for a unifying theme in scripture is to see if scripture itself offers us one. I am convinced that scripture does in fact provide us with just such a theme.

Intriguingly, the Brethren, and especially the Anabaptists, viewed this theme as a key for understanding God's eternal purposes. In fact, I was initially made aware of this theme by my reading in Brethren and Anabaptist sources. This theme answers probably the most basic question we can ask about our faith: What is God's ultimate purpose in human history?

---

*Dr. Stoffer is assistant professor of historical theology at Ashland Theological Seminary. He serves on The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

## Biblical background of the theme

In scripture a statement appears more than 50 times throughout the Old and New Testaments that directly answers this question. Its first appearance is in Genesis 17:7–8, while its last appearance is in Revelation 21:3. As generally stated it is: "I will be your God, and you will be my people." Sometimes the declaration is added: "I will dwell in the midst of you." This declaration is especially significant in the light of Exodus 33:12–16. The one thing that distinguished Israel from all other people was that they had the presence of God among them.

I call this theme the "peoplehood formula." It states that God's eternal purpose, which He has been working out throughout human history, is to have a people for Himself and for His own glory. It has been His purpose to have a people for His own possession among whom He will one day dwell in intimate communion (Rev. 21:3, 22).

This peoplehood formula appears most frequently in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) and in the Old Testament prophetic books. But it is also scattered throughout the New Testament in the writings of Paul, Peter, and John, in the book of Hebrews, and on the lips of James in Acts 15.

What is especially significant about this formula, or variations of it, is that it constantly appears whenever the topic of God's purposes for Israel and humanity are being discussed. It appears in the context of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 17:7–8; when God reaffirms His covenant with Israel under Moses in Exodus 6:7; as the foundation of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:2; as Israel is poised to enter the Promised Land in Deuteronomy 7:6; at the institution of the monarchy in 1 Samuel 12:22; at God's disclosure of the new covenant to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 31:33; in connection with the promise of the restoration of Israel following the Babylonian captivity in Ezekiel 11:20; in the context of the Messianic prophesies of Isaiah 63:8–9 and Zechariah 8:8, 13:9; as a rationale for God's intention to receive the Gentiles into the church without their having to become Jews by circumcision in Acts 15:13–14; as justification for God's rejection of unrepentant Israel and His inclusion of the Gentiles in His people in Romans 9:24–26; as a means of indicating the continuation of God's Old Testament people in the New Testament church in 1 Peter 2:9–10; as the final fulfillment and climax of God's redemptive plan in Revelation 21:3, 7. This peoplehood formula is the element of continuity that runs unbroken through all the major transitions in Israel's and the church's existence.

## Theological significance of the formula

The concept that God desires to form a people for Himself has profound implications for all aspects of theology. I will sketch out some of these implications below.

### The view of God

The peoplehood formula stresses not only the sovereignty of God and His otherworldliness in the first part ("I shall be your God"; see Exodus 20:2–3), but also His compassion and immanence in the second part ("You will be my people"; see 1 Samuel 12:22). It likewise affirms

***"The declaration 'You will be my people' tells us that we find our purpose only in relationship with God. We cannot find meaning and purpose in anything else, for only God can satisfy our need for fellowship, love, and acceptance."***

that all history is purposeful and is directed toward a single goal: the presence of God among a people who have His character and who bring Him glory.

The formula views God as the initiator of our relationship with Him, while we are always the responder to His grace. We are God's people solely because God graciously chose us, not because we merited His interest (see Deut. 7:6–8). What is most wondrous is that God has unilaterally acted over and over again on our behalf to bring His purpose to pass.

Significantly, this theme tells us that the basis of the relationship between God and humanity is relational before it is legal. God has chosen to be our God because He loves us (see Deut. 7:7–8), not because of our ability to keep His commandments. *But* this relationship lays upon His people concrete demands and expectations in both Old and New Testaments. While we don't come to God on the basis of our works, nonetheless obedience is to be one of the marks of God's people because of our love for Him (see Deut. 6:5–9; John 14:15, 21, 23). Our inner love relationship with God is the motivation for our obedience to Him. This view of our relationship with God thus affirms both divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

### View of humanity and sin

The declaration "You will be my people" tells us that we find our purpose only in relationship with God. We cannot find meaning and purpose in anything else, for only God can satisfy our need for fellowship, love, and acceptance. We are made for fellowship with God. But we are also made for fellowship with God's people. I will return to this idea when I talk about the church.

Our relationship with God, for which God created us, was broken by sin; because of the fall we all have become rebels to God's purpose for us. Our sin not only destroys fellowship with God, but it distorts all that we were meant to be by creation. It likewise introduced death into the human experience and the prospect of eternal spiritual death for those who reject God. Though we were meant for eternal fellowship with God, spiritual death is viewed in part as eternal departure or separation from God (see Matt. 25:41, 46).

### View of Christ and salvation

Jesus Christ is the one who reverses the terrible effects of sin, introduced by Adam and experienced anew by every one of his descendants by their own sinful acts. Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, unites God and humanity in His own person and reveals perfectly the life we are called to live as God's people. He alone, as the God-Man, is capable of restoring the broken relationship between God and humanity. As our Representative, He suffers the penalty due our sins on the cross; as our Redeemer, He frees us from our slavery to sin and defeats death and Satan; as our Reconciler, He makes possible renewed fellowship with God; as our Restorer, He embodies the new humanity we are to become.

We enter into renewed fellowship with God as His sons and daughters through repentance of our sins and faith in Jesus Christ. We continue to grow in the Christian faith through our faithfulness and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. The goal of this growth process is Christlikeness, to be renewed in His image (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:13).

**Correspondence Welcomed**

The members of the General Conference Executive Council's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication invite readers to suggest topics or Bible passages to discuss in future articles in this column. Send questions, comments, or suggestions to the committee in care of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

### View of the Spirit and the church

One of the important promises Jesus Christ gave to His disciples was: "I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Though Christ is not now with us bodily, He is present through the Holy Spirit, the Comforter He promised to send, who would be with us forever (John 14:16–17). The promise that is part of the peoplehood formula that God would dwell with us finds partial fulfillment already in the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence. Though one day we will dwell in the presence of God the Father and Son, the Spirit is now our "deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession" (Eph. 1:14).

I earlier noted that part of the concept of being God's people means that we were made for fellowship not only with God but also with God's people. God is continuing to fashion a people for His own glory in and through the church. It has been God's eternal purpose that, through the church, His will and redemptive plan in Christ should be made known (Eph. 1:22–23; 3:8–12).

Both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are essential to the church. Paul indicates that Christ is the Head of the church, uniting all believers in His body (1 Cor. 12:12) and providing the sustenance necessary for the body's growth (Col. 2:19). Using a different metaphor, Paul states that believers are "being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). Again we are reminded that God's promise to dwell among His people is now being realized through the Spirit's indwelling the church.

The teaching of the New Testament makes it clear that we, as God's new covenant people, cannot grow and mature without active

*(continued on page 9)*

# A Defense of Believer Immersion as a Standard for Membership in The Brethren Church

By G. Emery Hurd

IN THE APRIL ISSUE of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, Dr. Dale Stoffer wrote in support of accepting into membership in The Brethren Church people who have received *any form* of believer baptism instead of our current standard of restricting acceptance to those who have been *immersed* as believers.* I believe that it would be incorrect for us to modify our current standard of believer immersion.

Dr. Stoffer deals with this topic from three perspectives: biblical, the distinction between principle and form, and historical. I believe that from each of these perspectives the arguments in favor of maintaining our present practice are far more compelling.

## Biblical considerations

There are more than 50 biblical references to baptism, and in each case where location mattered, it was near a body of water. In Matthew 3:6–16 and Mark 1:4–10 we read of John the Baptist baptizing, and both passages specifically note that it was done in a body of water. The same texts report that Jesus' baptism included Him "coming out of the water," a clear indication that immersion was the mode used. In John 3:23 John the Baptist again baptizes at a particular location because it had a body of water. In Acts 8:35–40 and Acts 22:16 we see the apostles following the same practice, baptizing when there is a body of water available for immersion.

The testimony of scripture is quite clear and consistent: baptism is an act of burial and resurrection, a symbol of a new life in Christ, and a work of each of the three persons of the Trinity. It is also equally clear that baptism was to portray accurately these truths and that the New Testament standard for this portrayal is immersion.

Those individuals of sincere conviction who have been baptized as believers by other modes are not being told their previous baptisms were useless. They are merely being told that immersion is the most appropriate and most biblically defensible mode. Brethren identify themselves as biblical people. Therefore those who become Brethren need to submit to as complete a biblical model as possible.

I personally was sprinkled as an infant, then became converted as a teenager and was baptized by pouring. In my late teens, through personal Bible study, I became convinced that immersion was the only biblically defensible mode, and so I was baptized by immersion. And this was all before I joined The Brethren Church!

Were the previous baptisms useless? No, they were markers of significant life events for my family and me. They had spiritual significance to me. But when I am asked when I was baptized, I refer to the date I was immersed, because that is the act that I find to be the most biblically reflective of the principle of baptism.

## The issue of form and principle

Dr. Stoffer raises another issue —the distinction between form and principle. He states: "Principles are the essential biblical truths that must be believed regardless of culture. Forms are the outward expression of principles which *tend to vary* from culture to culture . . ." (*emphasis added*).

I believe that this definition is inadequate because there are three divisions rather than two. While forms tend to vary, some forms are critical to the proper communication and understanding of the principle and, as such, are trans-cultural. *Principles* are basic beliefs that are trans-cultural. *Indicative forms* are expressions of a principle that are so significant to the understanding of the principle itself that they are also trans-cultural. *Cultural forms* are expressions of principles that are influenced more by the culture than by the principle, and as such may vary from place to place.

A child covered with dirt after a hard day's play needs to get totally wet and totally washed to be declared "clean." No mother would wash the face of a dirty child and declare that child—with his dirty clothes, mud-smeared hands, and dusty feet—"clean." She may use liquid or bar soap, a washcloth or a sponge, hot or warm water. But to a mother, the principle of clean has an indicative form: get the whole kid wet and all the dirt gone!

I see immersion as an *indicative form*. The significance of baptism is complete cleansing from sin. The word "baptize" in the Greek original means to dip or plunge, to be totally covered with water. The biblical model was immersion, regardless of whether the believer was Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free, (that's trans-cultural!). Baptism ***is*** immersion, and the immersion form is inexorably linked to the principles that baptism seeks to communicate.

The early church fathers agree that immersion is an indicative

*See "Should The Brethren Church Accept into Membership People Previously Baptized by *Any Form* of Believer Baptism?" on pages 5–7 of the April issue.

*Rev. Hurd is pastor of the Cheyenne, Wyoming, Brethren Church.*

***"The discussion of our practice should not be based upon what others do or what others believe, but rather upon what we as Brethren have come to understand through our history and our understanding of scripture to be truth."***

form. The *Didache* did recognize the *possible need* for pouring, ***but only after all possible means for immersion were exhausted.****
Where in America is immersion impossible? Elbert White, a Southern Baptist missionary in Zimbabwe, carries a portable baptistry in his Landrover in which to immerse new converts. There may be those rare medical and environmental situations in which pouring may be the only available form. But other modes of baptism are not justified by personal choice or transfer of membership.

The idea of immersion being an *indicative form* was established by The Brethren Church more than a decade ago, when we moved from trine immersion to believer immersion as our standard. We recognized that our particular practice (immersion three times forward), while valid and proper, was not essential to the principle of symbolic cleansing. But we did agree that, as Brethren understand scripture, *immersion* is essential to a proper communication of the principles of baptism. In other words, the Brethren have already decided that immersion is an indicative form.

### The historical discussion

Throughout our history, Brethren have consistently baptized only by believer immersion. The truth that there are believers' churches that practice other modes of baptism is irrelevant to the discussion. There are believers' churches that don't practice feetwashing. Should we make that an optional practice in the church? There are believers' churches that have different practices about ordination and the gifts of the Spirit. Should we modify our positions? The discussion of our practice should not be based upon what others do or what others believe, but rather upon what we as Brethren have come to understand through our history and our understanding of scripture to be truth.

*See the quotation from the *Didache* on page 7 of the April issue.

### The need for compassion

I understand the deeply personal issues involved in asking someone to be rebaptized, having been rebaptized myself. In good faith and with the counsel of a particular church, people come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and then become baptized by some mode other than immersion. They come to a Brethren church, find a body of believers with whom they share belief and ministry, and seek to become members. We must not deny the validity of their faith. Nor should we question that at the time of their baptism they honestly believed that they were being obedient to God's word.

But being a member of any church means you choose to agree with the faith and practice of that particular body of believers. If you find the beliefs of that church to be significantly different from your own, you don't enter into membership.

I have had individuals refrain from joining The Brethren Church because we wash feet at Communion; or because we ordain women. It saddens me when this happens. But as Brethren we have a certain perspective, a certain biblical hermeneutic, and a unique history and heritage.

Believer immersion is a form that is essential to the communication of the principles of baptism. This has been the belief of the Brethren in the past. Since there is no compelling biblical or historical evidence to suggest that our understanding has been incorrect, it is my conviction that The Brethren Church should maintain believer immersion as its standard for membership. [⇧]

## The People of God

*(continued from page 7)*

involvement in the church (Eph. 4:11–16). Though we enter Christ's body individually by faith in Him, we cannot continue to grow in Christian maturity unless we are a functioning part of His body.

This truth directly challenges an unfortunate trait of American Christianity. We at times put so much stress on individual salvation that we minimize the necessity of being an active participant in the church. The church is not optional in God's redemptive plans. It plays the central role in God's present-day plan to form a people for Himself.

### The view of last things

As I read the book of Revelation, one of the things that strikes me is the number of passages that are devoted to the worship and praise of God by His people. When time becomes eternity by God's consummating work, we will live in the very presence of God, beyond the touch of death, mourning, crying, and pain (Rev. 21:3–4). The joy and love experienced in God's presence certainly will provide His people with the inspiration for the worship that rings throughout John's prophecy.

All of this is an assured promise to every one of us who is united with God and His people. Rightly does John end his Revelation with the words, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen" (Rev. 22:20–21).

### Conclusion

The peoplehood formula acquaints us with God's "big picture." God Himself reveals to us that His eternal plan is to have a people for His own possession. All that He has done from Genesis to Revelation is to the end that His people might again experience the blessed joy of His presence, a blessing God had intended for humanity from the beginning. [⇧]

# A Spiritual Awakening on the Ashland University Campus

By Michael Gleason

BY GOD'S PROVIDENCE, several students from Wheaton College in Illinois who had been deeply moved by the genuine spiritual awakening that occurred on their campus spoke this spring at Ashland University.

The gathering took place Wednesday, April 26, at HOPE Fellowship, where all present heard two gentle testimonies of the recent movement of the Holy Spirit, which visibly impacted approximately 25 colleges and seminaries* during the spring. The Wheaton students called our fellowship to earnest repentance, uncompromising and visible obedience to Christ and the scriptures, and public confession of sin.

When students were given an opportunity to respond, I witnessed what I had heretofore only read about, as one student after another came to the microphone not only to confess sin but also to pledge a desire for whole-hearted obedience to Christ.

## The Holy Spirit was in charge

The evening was both peaceful and genuine, with every appearance that only the Holy Spirit of God was in charge. Some students wept at the pulpit with a brokenness of heart that I had not seen before in my six years of service here. Others ran to their dorms to gather friends or to reconcile broken relationships.

*This powerful, nationwide revival apparently began at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas. A few of the other campuses on which spiritual awakenings have occurred include Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas; Illinois Baptist College, Trinity College, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, all in Illinois; Gordon College and Eastern Nazarene College in Massachusetts; Asbury College in Kentucky; Taylor University in Indiana; and Northwestern College and Crown College in Minnesota.

*Dr. Gleason is Director of Religious Life on the Ashland University campus.*

The recommitments to faith were too numerous to count. Clusters of students could be found around the chapel sharing tears, reconciliation, support, and prayer. The public testimonies and confessions began at 10:00 p.m. and continued without interruption for a full 3½ hours. A witness to the genuineness of this movement of the Spirit was the fact that spontaneous meetings for prayer, praise, and confession of sin, accompanied by bold witnessing, continued from April 26 until the end of the semester (May 11).

## A Solemn Assembly

This gracious visitation of God to our campus was divinely correlated with a Solemn Assembly, which had been previously scheduled for the following evening, April 27. A Solemn Assembly is a call to the community of faith to engage in earnest individual and corporate confession as well as renewal of faith and commitment. All who desired to attend the assembly were challenged to prepare by fasting and careful self-examination. A list of corporate sins was also compiled by students officers.

When we gathered on April 27, numerous students from the previous evening joined us for the event. Various biblical challenges were presented by the staff, and a full hour was given for individual confession and repentance.

When students returned from this season of self-examination, they brought with them armloads of questionable literature, CD's, and the like, which they mounded on a four- by eight-foot table until the entire surface was nearly covered. The students had responded not to an emotional plea, but to the convicting hand of the Holy Spirit, which caused a genuine turning from all questionable behavior. The evening concluded with selection of accountability partners, confession of corporate sin, and pledges to keep the following covenant:

> We, the people of this Christian community, do solemnly pledge to earnestly strive to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We recognize that this pledge of love and obedience involves strong and regular spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, Bible study, and corporate worship. In addition, this pledge is a vow to uncompromising obedience to the Holy God and His sacred Scriptures. Due to the fact that we are a sinful people and easily prone to wander from our faith and promises, we also pledge to be involved with another Christian who will hold us accountable to this Covenant of Promise.

During the first week after we reconvene in the fall, another Solemn Assembly will be held. During that assembly an opportunity will be given for all present to recommit themselves to this Covenant of Promise. Please join us in praying that the Author of this fresh awakening might be pleased to continue His work of mercy, grace, conviction, and repentance throughout the coming academic year. [⇧]

"In 25 years of teaching I've never seen anything like this," said John Woodbridge,* church historian at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where revival also broke out. Revivals have occurred on campuses of various sizes and denominations, but they are so similar that "it is uncanny," Woodbridge added.

"My hope is that pastors all over the country will invite students into their churches to speak about reconciliation," Woodbridge went on to say. "One of the things that really is holding back the evangelical church is lack of reconciliation between members. These young people are leading the way for reconciliation."

*Quoted in the April 17, 1995, issue of National & International Religion Report.

*General Conference Preview*

# 1995 General Conference Schedule

Theme: "The Devoted Church . . . Grows" (Acts 2:42–47)

August 7–11 at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio

**Monday, August 7**
4:00 p.m. — New Delegate Briefing
6:30 p.m. — Opening Celebration including BYIC greetings and featuring address by Moderator Reilly Smith
8:30 p.m. — Reception

**Tuesday, August 8**
8:30 a.m. — Devotional/Prayer Time
9:00 a.m. — Business Session
1:30 p.m. — Business Session
3:00 p.m. — Auxiliary Sessions (WMS, BMOM, NABCE)
7:00 p.m. — Worship Service featuring message by Rev. William M. Easum

**Wednesday, August 9**
7:00 a.m. — Pastors' Wives Fellowship/Continental Breakfast (reservtion required)
8:30 a.m. — Devotional/Prayer Time
9:00 a.m. — All-Conference Seminar on "Equipping the Laity for Ministry" led by Rev. William M. Easum
12:00 noon — Women's Luncheon (reservation required) featuring message by Mrs. Jill Briscoe

**Wednesday, August 9** (continued)
12:00 noon — Men's Picnic (reservation required) followed by BMOM and NABCE sessions
3:00 p.m. — Workshops
5:00 p.m. — World Relief Soup Supper featuring message by Mrs. Jill Briscoe (reservation required)
7:00 p.m. — Worship Service featuring message by Rev. William M. Easum

**Thursday, August 10**
8:30 a.m. — Devotional/Prayer Time
9:00 a.m. — Business Session
1:30 p.m. — Auxiliary Sessions
5:00 p.m. — Missionary Board Buffet (reservation required)
7:00 p.m. — Worship Service led by Missionary Board personnel

**Friday, August 11**
8:30 a.m. — Devotional/Prayer Time
9:00 a.m. — Business Session
10:30 a.m. — Closing Session featuring Youth Convention report and challenge by new Moderator Richard Allison

## William M. Easum to Speak

WILLIAM M. EASUM, church growth consultant and former pastor, will present two messages and lead a seminar at this summer's General Conference. During the Tuesday evening worship service he will speak on "The Ever-Widening Circle," and Wednesday evening he will deal with the Conference theme, "The Devoted Church . . . Grows." Wednesday morning he will present a seminar on "Equipping the Laity for Ministry."

From 1969 to 1993, Rev. Easum served as senior pastor of Colonial Hills United Methodist Church in San Antonio, Texas. During his pastorate, the church grew from a congregation of 35 in worship that was facing bankruptcy to a worship attendance of 1,000 with an annual budget of $1,100,000. More than half of the church's new members came from the ranks of unchurched young adults, and nearly half of the congregation were single adults. The congregation also had one of the strongest social justice ministries in America as well as a comprehensive ministry of the laity.

Rev. Easum now serves as executive director of 21st Century Strategies, Inc., a non-profit organization devoted to re-tooling pastors, churches, and denominational leaders for ministry in a new world. His ministry is devoted to consulting with churches and denominational leaders, training the leaders of tomorrow, and writing practical books and materials on ministry in the 1990s and beyond. His several books include *Church Growth Handbook, How to Reach Baby Boomers, Dancing With Dinosaurs,* and *The Sacred Cow Makes Gourmet Hamburgers.*



A 1961 graduate of Baylor University (B.A.), he also has degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div.) and Perkins School of Theology (S.T.M.). Before becoming pastor of the Colonial Hills Church, he first served the Highland Terrace UMC in San Antonio Tex., as an associate; then pastored the San Juan UMC in San Juan, Tex.

He is married, and he and his wife, Jan, have one daughter, Caran. His hobbies are fishing and flying. [⇧]

*General Conference Preview*

# 1995 National BYIC Convention

### Theme: "Keeping It Simple" (1 Cor. 2:1–5)

### August 7–11 at Ashland University

A MISSIONS BANQUET, a concert by the contemporary Christian vocal group AVB, Youth Communion, and special evening worship services will be highlights of this year's BYIC Convention.

The Missions Banquet on Tuesday evening will feature as speakers Todd and Tracy Ruggles, Brethren missionaries to Mexico City. Rev. Tom Schiefer, pastor of the Smoky Row (Worthington, Ohio) Brethren Church will lead the Wednesday evening Communion service.

Speaker for the Tuesday evening worship service will be former pro-football player Rev. Rickey Bolden, now Brethren pastor of the Southeast Christian Fellowship in Washington, D.C. Rev. Jim Koontz, pastor of the Louisville, Ohio, First Brethren Church, will speak at the Wednesday evening service. And the Thursday evening speaker will be Don Belsterling, the new youth pastor at Ashland's Park Street Brethren Church.

Other events on the BYIC Convention schedule include a concert of prayer, an informational session, tubing down the Mohican River, workshops, the annual Coffeehouse, as well as daily Morning Praise and Share and Prayer groups. The youth will join the adults for worship on Monday evening and for the closing worship service on Friday morning. Except for these sessions, the BYIC Convention will be independent of the adult Conference.

All youth attending the BYIC Convention must pre-register (no walk-ins accepted at the Convention). Registration information was mailed to advisors and pastors in mid-May. The last date to register is July 15, and a discount is available to those whose registrations are postmarked before July 1. Additional discounts are available if youth are National BYIC members or have memorized 1 Corinthians 2.

All youth at the Convention must stay on campus, and attendance is mandatory at all Convention events. The registration fee includes four nights of housing (Monday through Thursday); therefore, any youth or adult sponsors who will arrive on Sunday must register with adult housing for Sunday night. [⇧]

## Conference Registration Information

**Every person** planning to attend Conference must complete a registration form (next page)—even if you live in Ashland or are not planning to stay on campus.

### General instructions:

1. Room rates include sheets and towels. Bring your own **pillow, washcloths,** and **extra towels** if desired.
2. We must pay for every bed used, but children accompanying parents may sleep on the floor in their parents' room at no charge. No linen will be provided. Bring a pad or sleeping bag. Single rooms have floor space for only one child, doubles for two, triples for three. Register early to assure getting your desired accommodations. A limited number of triple rooms are available.
3. Tickets for meals served in the university cafeteria Tuesday through Friday are usable any day. Since **no refunds are given**, order **only** as many tickets as you will need for the week. Meal tickets may also be purchased at the door. The price is the same.
4. The Women's Luncheon, Men's Picnic, and Missionary Board Buffet will be held at the new Family Life Center of Park Street Brethren Church.
5. In addition to the children's program listed on the registration form, baby-sitting for infants through preschoolers will be available in the Kem Hall preschool rooms during morning and evening sessions. Activities are also planned for children 4 years old through 6th grade on Thursday **during** the Missionary Board Buffet (approximately 4:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.). Children must eat before going to the Thursday evening activities.

## Children's Program

Because of the success of last year's Kids' Konference, this year the program will be open to pre-school children —ages two (must be potty-trained) to four. This program will give children too old for the nursery an opportunity to expand their minds through Christian activity—Bible stories, singing, finger plays, art activities, etc.

Parents will be welcome to come and go as they please and may stay and interact with the children as needed. Any parent interested in volunteering to help with the program may contact Aly Pflugfelder at 419-281-0163 or indicate this interest on the child's registration form.

### Other Information

**Housing** — The housing desk will be open Sunday evening from 6:00 until 9:00 p.m.; Monday from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and after the evening program; and at other times listed in the program book. The housing desk will be located in the Convocation Center lobby.

**Camping** — Available at Ashland County Fairgrounds, 2042 Claremont Ave., Ashland; $10.00 per night; pay on arrival. No advance reservation is required.

**Credentials** — General Conference delegate credentials should be submitted in person at the earliest possible time. Credentials will be received in the Convocation Center lobby Monday 2:00–6:00 p.m. and following the evening program; Tuesday through Friday, 8:00–8:30 a.m.; Tuesday, 1:00–1:30 p.m.; and Tuesday through Thursday, 6:30–7:00 p.m.

**Non-Delegate Guests** — Non-delegates are welcome to attend Conference. Please complete a reservation form. Non-delegates are asked to check in at the credential table and pay a fee of $10.00. Each guest is then entitled to a guest name badge and a Conference packet.

**Pastors** — Please feel free to copy this information and the registration form as a way to encourage a large delegation from your church.

**See instructions on previous page.**

Theme:
"The Devoted Church . . . Grows"

# 1995 General Conference

Registration Form

Monday, August 7, through
Friday, August 11

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Please reserve only one room per form. YOUTH are to register through the National BYIC if staying in YOUTH DORM. If staying with adults, use this form. **NOTE:** Registration with prepayment by **July 21** results in guaranteed reservation.

| **Housing:** | Rates** | **Prepaid by July 21** | **Upon arrival** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ashland University Dormitory | Single | $17.00 | $21.00 |
| Floor: Women's restroom ____ Men's ____ | Double | 24.50 | 29.00 |
| Room type: Single ____ Double ____ Triple ____ | Triple | 35.00 | 39.00 |

**no charge for children not sleeping in a bed

Nights staying: S ___ M ___ T ___ W ___ Th ___

Other preferences: _____

No key deposit required, but there will be a $25 charge for any key lost.

**Housing costs calculation**

No. nights x rate/night

_____ x _____ = $ _____

**CAMPING:** Ashland Fairgrounds

Water and electric hookups, restrooms, and showers. $10.00 per night. Pay on arrival.

## Meal Tickets

Meals served in University cafeteria; tickets usable any day; order as many as you need for the week.

| | | **No. tickets** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breakfast | Adults | _____ x | $3.80 = $ | _____ |
| | Children under 12 | _____ x | $1.90 = | _____ |
| Lunch | Adults | _____ x | $5.00 = $ | _____ |
| | Children under 12 | _____ x | $2.50 = | _____ |
| Dinner | Adults | _____ x | $6.25 = $ | _____ |
| | Children under 12 | _____ x | $3.10 = | _____ |

## Banquet Reservations

Reservations for following events are a must due to early deadlines. Tickets ordered after July 21 subject to availability. No meal refunds after August 1.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wed. 7:00 a.m. — Pastors' Wives Continental Breakfast/Fellowship | | _____ x | $3.00 = | _____ |
| Wed. noon — Women's Luncheon | Adults | _____ x | $5.50 = | _____ |
| | Children under 6 | _____ x | $2.75 = | _____ |
| | Children under 3 | _____ x | free | |
| Wed. noon — Men's Picnic | | _____ x | $5.50 = | _____ |
| Wed. 5:00 p.m. — World Relief Soup Luncheon | | _____ | (offering will be taken) | |
| Thurs. eve. — Missionary Board Buffet | | _____ x | $8.50 = | _____ |

**Total Meals and Banquets Enclosed = $_____**

## Summary Totals

Total Housing Enclosed = $_____

Total Meals and Banquets Enclosed = $_____

Total Children's Program Enclosed = $_____

Total Enclosed = $_____

Make checks payable to

**General Conference Housing**

Send to:

General Conference Housing
524 College Avenue
Ashland, OH 44805

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Reg. #_____

Date rec._____

Amount rec._____

Check #_____

**CHILDREN'S PROGRAM and PRESCHOOL LEARNING CENTER** (ages 2 years through completed 6th grade):

Tuesday through Thursday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.; Fri., 8:15 a.m. to noon.
Lunch provided Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

| **Family Rates** | Week | Day | | Week | Day |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 child | $46.00 | $15.00; | 2 or more children | $70.00 | $24.00 |

| Child's Name | Age/Grade Completed | Days (circle) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | ___ ___ | T W Th F | $_____ |
| _____ | ___ ___ | T W Th F | $_____ |
| _____ | ___ ___ | T W Th F | $_____ |

Total for Children's Program $_____

**Mail this form as soon as possible with payment in full (but no later than July 21).**

**Send to: General Conference Housing, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805**

# Brethren Pastors' Retreat Focuses on Self-Care Issues for Pastoral Families

**Walnut Creek, Ohio** — This tiny village perched on a hill in the heart of Ohio's Amish Country was the site April 25–27 of the 1995 Brethren Pastors' Retreat.

The pastors, other elders, and wives who attended the gathering (approximately 80 in all) stayed in the elegant, Victorian-style Carlisle Village Inn—where sessions of the retreat were also held. The inn is located next to the Der Dutchman Amish-style restaurant, which catered the sumptuous evening meals of the retreat.

The retreat began late Tuesday afternoon with a welcoming session led by Jeff Whiteside, who also chaired other retreat sessions. Whiteside is president of the Ohio District Ministerial Association, which planned the retreat.

A worship service led by Rev. Tom Schiefer followed the evening meal. This was a time of worship through singing of hymns and praise choruses (accompanied by Richard Rader), with times of scripture reading and prayer interspersed throughout the service.

On Wednesday morning and evening, Rev. Brian Moore, pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church, gave presentations on self-care issues for the pastoral family. Drawing on material he developed for his recently-completed final document ("He Restores My Soul: The Recovery of Pastoral Health in Mid-Career") for a Doctor of Ministries degree, Rev. Moore spoke in the morning on why self-care is necessary and gave a biblical and theological basis for self-care.

Self-care is necessary, he said, because the Christian minister has been taught to deny self, to forsake self. But in being self-sacrificing, some pastors have lost their humanness. Quoting St. Paul, he acknowledged that the Christian minister is an earthen vessel holding a heavenly treasure. But he asked, "What good does it do for the vessel to be broken?"

Moore maintained that pastoral families need to take care of themselves because of the demands of the ministry. "I don't suppose there is an occupation anywhere that is quite as demanding of the total self as ministry is," he said. The pastorate makes physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and (especially) spiritual demands on the individual. Pastors need self-care "because it takes our entire being to minister well."

Self-care is also necessary because of the unrealistic expectations put on pastors and their families. These expectations are both internal (what the pastor expects of himself) and external (what the congregation expects of the pastor). The latter can be both real (what the congregation actually expects) and imagined (what the pastor thinks they expect). The pastor cannot be indifferent to the expectations of his congregation, for if he is, he will be looking for a "greener pasture." On the other hand, he must not be bound by those demands, for then he fails to act intentionally.



*The Carlisle Village Inn, located in the heart of Ohio's Amish country, proved to be an excellent facility for this year's Pastors' Retreat.*

In discussing the biblical and theological basis for self-care, Rev. Moore looked at implications from creation (wholeness, food, rest, meaningful activity, etc.), the example of the Apostles in Acts 6 (prioritizing and setting boundaries), the example of Jesus (solitude, rest, food), and various passages from Paul's writings.

Rev. Moore concluded his first session by administering self-analysis surveys to retreat participants, which enabled them to evaluate the stresses they are experiencing and the effects these stresses are having on their ministries.

In the Wednesday evening session, Rev. Moore first reviewed the results of the surveys completed during the morning session, then looked at what pastors can do to maintain self-care. Using the analogy of an ambulance that needs to be filled with gas and properly maintained in order to perform its function of carrying people to the hospital, he asked, "How shall we take care of the ambulance?"

First, pastors must take control of their own lives. "Unless I can make my own decisions, I am doomed to fail in

*(continued on next page)*



*Jeff Whiteside begins one of the sessions of Pastors' Retreat.*

# GCEC Discusses Organizational Proposal; Cares for Other Current Business Items

**Ashland, Ohio** — An organizational proposal prepared by the National Leadership Council* was a major item of discussion at the General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) meeting held Friday, May 19.

The proposal—which recommended two parallel boards to oversee denominational ministries (a Missionary Board to oversee world and home missions and world relief; and a Board of Church Ministries to oversee pastoral ministries, evangelism and church growth, youth ministry, leadership development, and spiritual formation)—did not prove to be acceptable to the council. The proposal also recommended creating the new position of executive director as chief executive officer of The Brethren Church; called for establishment of an executive committee to manage the business and legal affairs of General Conference and The Brethren Church; and recommended setting up an office of administration to provide support services.

When it became evident that this proposal was not supported by members of GCEC, six members of the council were appointed to seek a meeting with the executive committee of the Missionary Board in which to develop a different proposal. Members of GCEC also expressed an interest in a single-board organizational structure.

*The six members of the National Leadership Council are the General Conference moderator, moderator-elect, and past moderator; the Executive Director and president of the Missionary Board; and the Director of Brethren Church Ministries.

**Other items of note from the meeting:**

- Two part-time additions to the National Office staff were announced by Rev. Ron Waters, director of Brethren Church Ministries. **Jennifer Thomas** will serve as a summer staff member to assist with planning and implementing the National BYIC Convention; and **Linda Barr**, working "very part-time" as an independent contractor, will coordinate some aspects of the national youth ministry.
- Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Ind., was tentatively approved as the location that GCEC will recommend to General Conference for the 1997 Conference, pending results of a visit to the campus by Ron Waters and Gene Eckerley.
- A three-percent increase in the figures on the current Pastor's Salary/Benefits Package was approved as the scale for 1996.
- The same Fair Share support figures used in 1995 were approved for 1996.
- A committee was formed to study the problem of pastoral-congregational conflict in The Brethren Church and to develop specific recommendations in three general areas: creating an atmosphere of conciliation in our churches; defining the leadership roles of pastor and deacon in local congregations; and implementing polity that will foster reconciliation in congregations facing conflict. Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, and Rev. Gene Eckerley, Indiana District Elder, were named to co-chair the committee. They are to select several pastors and lay people to serve with them.

*— reported by Dick Winfield*

## Pastors' Retreat

*(continued from previous page)*

this effort of self-care," he said. And he quoted Tobias Brocher as saying, "People who are suffering most from stress are those who feel they can't determine their lives."

Secondly, pastors must build on resources already present in their lives. Those include one's own faith development (including our Brethren spiritual roots of inner piety and spiritual vitality), one's marriage, and one's own interests (pastors need a hobby).

And finally, pastors must fight the tempting urge to be a messiah. The work of the church is the ministry of all the people, not just the pastor.

Following Rev. Moore's morning presentation, directors of the Brethren Retirement Board sponsored a session in which changes in the Brethren Church Pension Plan from a trustee-directed to a participant-directed plan were explained. Wednesday afternoon was free time, during which many of the retreat participants spent the sunny, warm afternoon visiting some of the many tourist attractions in the area.

The retreat concluded on Thursday morning with a service that included a time of worship through singing led by Rev. Fred Brandon and accompanied by Rich Rader; a message about standing against the wiles of the devil by Rev. Charles Lowmaster; and a mini-concert by April Lowmaster.

*— reported by Dick Winfield*

## Membership in Andrew Center Now Free to Brethren Churches

**Ashland, Ohio** — Brethren churches can now become members of The Andrew Center at absolutely no cost to the congregation.

The Andrew Center is a service organization dedicated to supporting the ministry of local churches. The mission of the center is to multiply the number of persons turning to Jesus Christ by multiplying the number of leaders and congregations spiritually alive and evangelistically effective.

Benefits of congregational membership in the Andrew Center include:

- A toll-free action line to any of three congregational advisors to discuss evangelism, church growth, or Passing On the Promise matters.
- Free subscriptions for the pastor and up to 12 additional persons to *New Beginnings*, the quarterly journal of The Andrew Center, and to *Up to the Minute*, a newsletter with information on Andrew Center research projects.
- Registration discounts at Andrew Center training and networking events.
- Discounts on selected Andrew Center resources.
- Opportunity for telephone consultation by the pastor with Steve Clapp, the senior consultant for The Andrew Center.
- Special invitations to networking events.

The Brethren Church became a denominational member of The Andrew Center on March 1. The offer of free membership for Brethren congregations is in exchange for an annual grant scholarship to the center from The Brethren Church. Congregational membership in the Andrew Center normally runs from $150 to $600, depending on the size of the congregation.

Even though membership is free, each Brethren congregation must activate its own membership. Details for doing so have been sent to each church.

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The U.S.–U.N. military operation in Somalia cost the United States about $2 billion, *five times more than its total development expenditures in Somalia for the previous 30 years.*

In Rwanda, Americans spent $183 million on emergency aid, according to the U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda, David P. Rawson. *Only $19 million was budgeted and even less than that spent on development assistance.*

*— Source: World Relief* WORLD BRIEFS

## From The Grape Vine



**Rev. Daniel Rosales**, pastor of the Sarasota, Fla., Iglesia Hispana de los Hermanos, spent the first two weeks in May in an evangelistic outreach in Colombia, South America. He held revival services in Brethren churches in Bogotá and Medellín. In Medellín, even though it rained every night during the services, the church was packed with people hungry for the word of God. A total of 91 people came forward in the services, with approximately 35 of those coming to receive Jesus for the first time and the rest to renew their commitment to the Lord. In Medellín Rev. Rosales also spoke at an interdenominational meeting attended by approximately 80 pastors and lay leaders. At the end of the service, nine pastors came forward to renew their vows of service to the Lord.

The **Smoky Row Brethren Church** in Worthington (a suburb of Columbus), Ohio, is exploring the possibility of building an addition to its church building. At a congregational meeting held March 19, members approved a recommendation to form a building committee and hire an architect. This will be the second addition to the original building, which was completed in 1983. The Smoky Row Church was begun as a home mission congregation in 1980. Its current membership is approximately 85 and worship attendance in 1994 averaged 125. Rev. Tom Schiefer pastors the congregation, and Jeff Whiteside is the associate pastor.

This year marks the 75th Anniversary of the Indiana District's **Brethren Retreat** at Shipshewana, Ind. The Retreat Ministry also has a new director this year, **Richard W. Miller** from the Wabash, Ind., First Brethren Church.

On the light side, a letter was received at the **National Office** in May addressed to *Brethren Publishing Co., George E. Baer, Bus[iness] Mgr.* George E. Baer has not been business manager since his death in 1948! The letter was from Destiny Publishers.

* * * * *

If you are a computer buff and also serious about your Christian faith, you might be interested in a magazine that speaks to both—*Christian Computing® Magazine*. Published by Christian Computing, Inc., this magazine contains articles of interest to people who want to use computers to enhance their Christian lives and ministries, plus information about computer software useful for personal Bible study, preparing Sunday school lessons or sermons, managing a church budget, etc. For subscription information or to receive a sample copy, call 1-800-456-1868.

## Logans to Spend Two Years Teaching in Djibouti, Africa

**Bridgewater, Va.** — Mark and Chantal Logan have announced plans to spend two years in Djibouti in northeast Africa teaching in the public schools as Missionary Associates with Eastern Mennonite Mission.

This will be a return to foreign missionary service for the Logans, who served as Brethren missionaries in Argentina (1970–73) and Colombia (1976–89). Rev. Logan has also been a Home Mission pastor, serving the 340 Brethren Church near Elkton, Virginia, for the past one and one-half years.

Djibouti is a French-speaking country, and Islam is the predominant religion. French is Chantal's native tongue, and Mark is also fluent in the language. They will be studying Islam at the Summer Institute of Islam in Philadelphia this summer. They plan to depart for Djibouti toward the end of August.

Even though they will be serving with Eastern Mennonite Mission in Djibouti, Rev. Logan stated that they are not leaving The Brethren Church. Rather they see this is a means of becoming more involved as Brethren in worldwide Christianity.

## Ten Brethren Receive Degrees May 13th at Ashland University

**Ashland, Ohio** — Ten Brethren students were among the 731 graduates who received bachelor degrees May 13 at Ashland University's 177th commencement ceremony.

The ten Brethren students who received degrees were:

*Janet Aguiar*, member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church; B.A. with a major in religion.

*Sarah Hollewell Black*, member of the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church; B.S. with a major in mathematics (*summa cum laude*).

*Troy Cummins*, member of the Bryan, Ohio, First Brethren Church; B.S. in Education with a major in elementary education (*magna cum laude*).

*Joseph Dilgard*, member of Park Street Brethren Church; B.A. with a major in accounting/business administration.

*April Given*, attends Park Street Brethren Church; B.S. in Education with a major in education of the handicapped.

*Kimberly Kristin Hubble*, attends University Church and former member of the Tucson, Ariz., First Brethren Church; B.S. with majors in criminal justice and religion.

*Karen Robins*, member of the Tucson, Ariz., First Brethren Church; B.A. with a major in religion.

*Kristi Lee Paull*, member of the Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church; B.S. in Education with majors in kindergarten-primary education and history (*magna cum laude*).

*Stephen Berry*, member of Park Street Brethren Church; Bachelor of Music with a major in music education.

*Nathan Williams*, member of the Roanoke, Ind., First Brethren Church; B.A. with a major in sociology (*cum laude*).

### In Memory

**Thelma Lee**, 81, May 14. Member for 25 years of the Pleasant View Brethren Church, where she was active in W.M.S. and Sunday school. Services by Pastor R. Keith Hensley.

**Dorothy Miller**, 74, May 4. Faithful friend of the Roanoke First Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Ron Burns.

**Ora P. Greer**, 87, April 28. Member of the Corinth Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Rod Schuler.

**Mattie Criss**, 75, April 24. Friend of the Pleasant View Brethren Church. Services by Pastor R. Keith Hensley.

**Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Pennock**, 80, April 19. Member for a total of 70 years at the Gatewood Brethren Church and the Oak Hill First Brethren Church, where she also served as a Sunday school teacher. Services by Pastor William Skeldon and Rev. Milton Robinson.

**George Welch**, 72, December 7. Member for 61 Years of the North Manchester First Brethren Church. Services by Rev. Mitchell Funkhouser, pastor of the Warsaw First Brethren Church.

### Goldenaires

**Amber and Kenneth Hagerich**, 55th, June 17. Members of the Vinco Brethren Church.

**Walter and Margaret (Peg) Eldridge**, 60th, March 30. Members of the Goshen First Brethren Church. The Eldridges renewed their wedding vows during the service on April 2 at the Goshen First Brethren Church.

### Membership Growth

**Oakville:** 6 by baptism

**New Lebanon:** 4 by baptism

# Little Crusader

**Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).**

## Hi boys and girls!

Are you enjoying being out of school? June is such a fun month in which to play outside and to go swimming! It's also a great time to play T-ball or baseball. Another activity my son looks forward to in June is church camp. And this is also a month in which to remember a very important date—Father's Day.

Do you plan to do something special with your dad on Father's Day? Are you going to serve him breakfast in bed? Do you plan to make him a nice card? Are you going to tell him that he's the greatest dad in the world and that you love him?

The Bible tells us many times that we are to honor or respect our fathers. Proverbs 23:22 says to listen to your father, who gave you life. One of the Ten Commandments says to honor your father and your mother. Proverbs 13:1 says that a wise son will listen to his father's instructions.

What if you don't have a father? You may not have an earthly father, but everyone has a Heavenly Father. God, our Father, is very pleased when we show Him how much we love Him.

What are you going to do for your father on Father's Day this year? I hope you will tell your father how important he is to you. And don't forget to tell God how important He is to you as well.

### Unscramble the following words:




1. EYBO _____
2. CEETPSR _____
3. VEOL _____
4. RONHO _____
5. RLAHYET HAFRTE _____
6. LENVYEAH HAFRTE _____



7. Find one place in the Bible were it says to honor your father and mother, then write the reference (the name of the book and the chapter and verse numbers) on the line. (Your mom or dad may need to help you.)

_____

# News-Notes From Around the World

***Editor's note:*** *Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that the progress of the church encompasses much more than what is happening in our own congregation or in our denomination or even in the church in America. This is particularly true if things don't seem to be going well in our congregation or in our denomination or in the church in America. In such cases we sometimes unthinkingly conclude that the church everywhere is on the skids.*

*But God's work is much greater than the small part in which we are directly involved. And despite setbacks in some areas, the church is making great strides in many other places around the world. Following are several reports of just this kind of progress. And they come from the most unlikely of places. May we be encouraged by these reports of what God is doing in our world.*

## Cambodian Bible School Opens in Khmer Rouge Territory

Phnom Penh Bible School in Cambodia recently opened an extension campus in the middle of Khmer Rouge rebel-held territory.

According to Setan Lee, founder and director of the Phnom Penh Bible School (PPBS), the new school (Battambang Bible School) will offer a one-year training course to current pastors who lack adequate education.

Chhit Paul, pastor of a house church in Battambang, is the school's director. Teachers were chosen from the first graduating class of PPBS. Systematic teaching is offered for two weeks a month, eight months a year.

Paul has planted 16 house churches in surrounding villages. Pastors of these churches, new Christians themselves, began coming by bicycle two days a week to learn from Paul. Battambang Bible School is an outgrowth of those informal sessions.

The people of Battambang live in constant fear of rocket attacks, land mines, rape, robbery, and torture. Skirmishes flare up between rebel and government forces. But a powerful revival is also sweeping the Battambang area. When Christians face Khmer Rouge gunfire, they have no place to run, so they kneel and pray for protection. And the bullets miss them! Villagers praying to their spirits receive no such deliverance.

"When they see that," Setan Lee said, "nothing can stop them from becoming believers. It happens all the time." According to Lee, Battambang is strategically located to reach all the northwest areas of Cambodia.

## Ex-Communist Superstation Now Airs the Gospel

Due in part to an earthquake, the most powerful radio station in the world —*built by the Communists to spread their propaganda*—now proclaims the gospel to nations in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The earthquake occurred in Armenia in 1988. Following the earthquake, Jacob Jambazian, an ethnic Armenian, brought from Germany truckloads of food, blankets, clothing, medicines, and care packages supplied by Christians in America and Europe, which he distributed to suffering Armenians. Tucked into each truckload were 20,000 to 40,000 Armenian New Testaments, with a total of 200,000 New Testaments entering the country this way.

One of the New Testaments landed on the desk of the minister of media, who was in charge of all radio, television, and newspaper coverage in the country. Jambazian visited this man, and when he did so, the New Testament provided a link between the two.

Jambazian told the minister that he was interested in building a radio station for the purpose of broadcasting gospel messages to Armenians. In the course of the conversation that followed, the media minister offered Jambazian an opportunity to preach the gospel on "our radio station."

When Jambazian asked what radio station, the minister proceeded to tell him about a bank of radio transmitters that the Soviets had built during the heyday of the cold war. The Ural and Caucasus mountains blocked the signal of Radio Moscow from reaching China and the Islamic world. So the Communists built a bank of radio transmitters and located them on the mountains of Ararat in Armenia. Two 1-million-watt medium-wave transmitters, three 1-million-watt short-wave transmitters, and five 100,000-watt short-wave transmitters were connected to more than 50 towers—a total of 5.5 million watts of transmitting power. By contrast, the most powerful "clear-channel" station in the United States is limited to 50,000 watts.

The Communists used all this power to spread their propaganda. But with the breakup of the Soviet Union, Radio Moscow cut back its air time. The superstation in Armenia's back yard now has lots of time available.

Jambazian broadcasts a daily 30-minute program for Armenians over the superstation, which has the power to reach Armenians throughout most of the world. News and cultural presentations make up the first 15 minutes of his program, and a Good News message fills out the rest.

The station is also willing to sell time to other Christian groups desiring to broadcast the gospel to any people group within its reach.

## Three-Self Church Leaders Help Chinese House Churches

In China, many new leaders of the government-regulated Three-Self Church are using their positions of authority to help house churches in their areas.

Freddie Sun, China Division director for Christian Aid Mission, recently returned from visiting churches throughout China. He reports that as the older generation of hard-line Communists dies out in China, young, more evangelical seminary graduates are replacing the old Three-Self Church leaders. The old pastors often parroted Communist propaganda rather than the gospel. New church leaders refuse to compromise their beliefs.

"They have the power to start Bible schools and erect local church buildings, and they are using it. Now in some parts of China, there is little difference between the Three-Self Church and the house churches," Sun said.

## Croatian Evangelicals Plant Churches Among Bosnians

A missionary couple sent out from a fellowship of evangelical Christians in Croatia is making an impact on war-battered Bosnia. The couple, Karmelo and Ivon Kresonja, has been instrumental in planting three churches in the past two years.

The Kresonjas linked up with another Croatian missionary, Spoljaric Nikola, who had begun working in the city of Mostar several months earlier. With help from the Kresonjas, a congregation Nikola began has grown to about 200 members. Approximately 40 percent of the congregation is Muslim in background, about 40 percent are Croats (Roman Catholic background), and 20 percent are Serbs (Orthodox).

Together Nikola and the Kresonjas

have been responsible for planting a church in Tuzla, about 80 miles north of Sarajevo. The fledgling church numbers about 20, mostly from Muslim background. In addition, couples from the Mostar church have been responsible for starting two other churches. And a church-planting team has left Mostar for Sarajevo.

### 3,000 Believers Gather in "Nation with no Christian Witness"

Christianity is alive and spreading in Uzbekistan, an ex-Soviet country in which Westerns thought there was no Christian witness.

Slavik Radchuk, a Christian Aid field representative, recently visited a church of 3,000 believers in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. The enthusiasm of the members of this church is so great that in addition to Sunday services, 700 to 800 worshipers gather for prayer every morning of the week. Moreover, aggressive evangelistic outreach has resulted in the planting of 33 new churches in the country in the last three years.

The pro-Muslim government has sought to put a lid on evangelistic activity. A new law passed a year ago prohibits evangelicals from using the media or evangelizing in public. Despite these restrictions and some overt persecution, 80 to 100 new believers are baptized every month in Tashkent, largely as a result of personal evangelism. Christians invite their friends and neighbors to their houses for tea and talk about Jesus. House gatherings of 20 to 40 are common, and some house groups are as large as 100.

When authorities expressed suspicions of the church's large meetings, the leader pointed to the church's success in dealing with drug use among young people—a serious problem in Uzbekistan. So government ministers allowed the church to continue meeting.

### Cuban Churches Experience Revival

Cuban churches are spiritually strong and in the midst of revival, according to Axel Lanausse, founder and director of Asociacion Misionera Internacional (AMI).

A team from AIM visited Cuban churches late last year and found that even though Cuban authorities do not permit the construction of new church buildings, the house-church movement is growing without interference. Some house gatherings number 50 or more people. One Pentecostal church of 600 members in Havana acts as a coordinator for more than 100 house churches.

One pastor who serves in an area about two hours from Havana has begun his own training school. He recently took ten Cuban pastors to Venezuela for a training conference.

According to Lanausse, the deinstitutionalization of the churches in Cuba has resulted in a revival. "The churches in Cuba depend upon God. They are not praying political prayers. They pray for freedom to preach the gospel in their own country."

### House Churches Multiply in Viet Nam

The number of congregations in one branch of the unofficial house churches in Viet Nam has more than tripled in the last two years.

There are four branches of the house church movement in Viet Nam. This one, the largest, grew from about 100 congregations in April 1993 to 330 by the beginning of this year. "We had 850 converts in December alone," said a house-church leader. The same person said that their goal for 1995 is 500 churches.

In addition to the house churches, which are not recognized by the government, a large number of Tin Lanh churches operate openly with approval of the government.

*The seven reports above of church progress were gleaned from several issues of* Christian Aid Mission News, *a publication of Christian Aid Mission. Begun in 1953, Christian Aid Mission assists approximately 400 indigenous Christian ministries worldwide and is in contact with more than 5,000 others.*

## Briefly Noted

**Joni Eareckson Tada** won an essay contest that enables her ministry to deliver 200 free wheelchairs to Ghana. JAF Ministries, an outreach to the disabled, had the chairs but lacked the funds to deliver them. Joni learned of a Royal Dutch Airlines contest offering free air fare as the prize. Her winning essay described first-hand the freedom that wheelchairs offer to those limited by a disability. Joni has been a quadriplegic since a 1967 diving accident. The prize enables Joni and two dozen JAF Ministries staff members to fly free to deliver the chairs to the West African country.

**Steve Saint**, son of Nate Saint, one of five missionaries killed by the Auca Indians in 1956, is returning to Ecuador to help the tribe that killed his father. At the request of the tribe, which asked him to help them adjust to 20th century life, Saint (44), his wife, and four children will go to Ecuador this month (June) to start a clinic, trading store, mechanic's shop, and radio station. Many of the Aucas, now known as the Huaoronis, later became Christians, and Steve Saint was in fact baptized by one of the men who had killed his father. He has maintained close contact with the tribe over the years.

"Casino gambling can destroy the heart and soul of a city," said **Joseph Napolitan**, a political consultant who, in 1976, designed a strategy that won passage of a referendum allowing casino gambling in Atlantic City. That was the worst mistake of his career, he said in an article in a publication of Citizens Against Casino Gambling. Atlantic City started with one casino, but now has 11. Within three years the city's crime rate tripled, going from 50th in the nation per capita to first, Napolitan said. The number of homeless people increase by 2,000 percent, property values dropped, and almost 200 homes of people who refused to sell their property to casinos were destroyed in arson-related fires.

**North and South Korean Christians** hope to hold a joint service at the border village of Panmunjom on August 15. If both governments agree to the meeting, it will be the first official contact on the Korean peninsula by believers from the two Koreas. An estimated 25 percent of South Korea's 44 million people are practicing Christians, but North Korea estimates only 25,000 Christians among its 22 million people. Independent religious groups are illegal in North Korea, but thousands of believers meet regularly in small, secret prayer services. To avoid raising suspicion, the believers sing hymns set to tunes of Communist propaganda songs. It is reported that believers include Communist party members and military officers.

In **India** more than 4.5 million people viewed the *Jesus* film in 1994, according to India Campus Crusade for Christ. Of those, 508,928 made decisions for Christ. Organizers plan to launch 30 new Indian teams a month to take the film throughout the country.

*Items in "Briefly Noted" were taken from* National & International Religion Report (NIRR), *a biweekly briefing of religious news published by Religion Today, Inc. The* NIRR *newsletter is available in print for $49 a year (26 issues) from Religion Today, Inc., P.O. Box 21505, Roanoke, VA 24018. It is also available* ***free of charge*** *via E-Mail. For information about receiving it by E-Mail, call* NIRR *at 703-989-7500 (fax 703-989-0189).*

# 107th General Conference

**August 7–11**

**Ashland, Ohio**

## Theme: "The Devoted Church . . . Grows"

**Theme Verses: Acts 2:42–47**

The Book of the Acts describes the commitments of the early church—to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. These commitments of God's people led to a growing, expanding church in Jerusalem, in the surrounding areas of Judea and Samaria, and throughout the known world of that day.

As we master these same commitments, The Brethren Church will experience similar growth—in the maturity of "already Christians" and in the lives of new followers of Jesus Christ.



*William M. Easum*

### *The 1995 Conference will feature:*

- William Easum as our outside speaker and leader of a Wednesday workshop entitled "Equipping the Laity for Ministry"
- Jill Briscoe as speaker for the Women's Luncheon and World Relief Soup Supper
- Messages by Moderator Reilly Smith and Moderator-Elect Richard Allison
- Rich times of worship and fellowship
- A celebration of Brethren missions
- Updates on denominational ministries
- Exciting business sessions

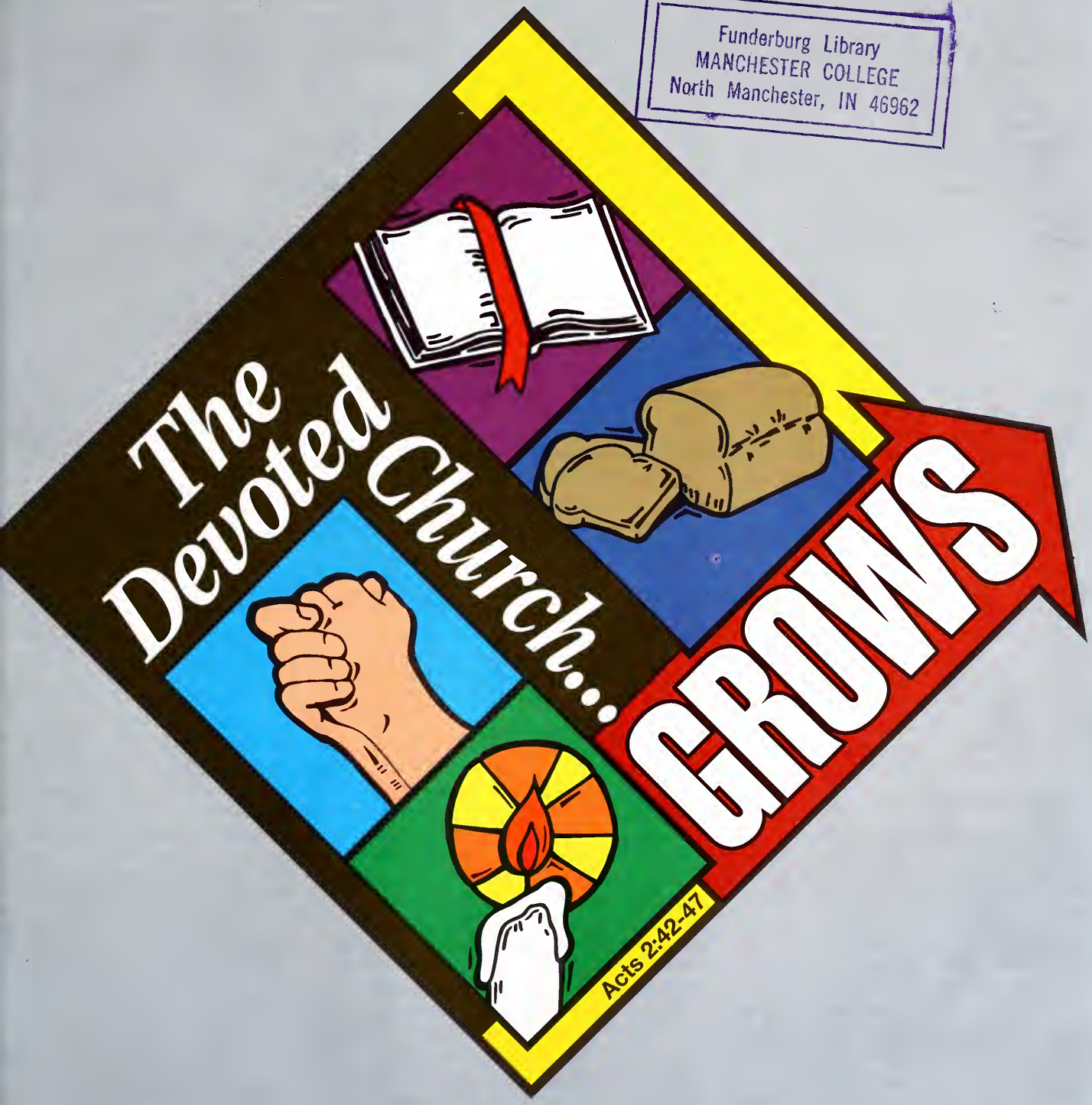
*Don't miss this year's General Conference! Make plans now to attend, and complete the registration form on page 13 no later than* ***July 21****.*

***See you in August!***

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THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST:

# Changing With the Times

By Richard C. Winfield, Editor

SOME MAJOR CHANGES will be introduced in THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST with the next issue (September). These changes will encompass the purpose, format, and content of the magazine as well as the way in which it is distributed.

The overriding purpose of the magazine will be to communicate a unified vision in The Brethren Church. It will seek to do this by presenting articles and ideas that tell who we are, where we're headed, and how we are attempting to get there. The focus will be on how we can achieve the priorities we have set for ourselves as a denomination. In sharing news from local Brethren churches, we will seek to report what is working and making an impact for Christ's kingdom rather than just what is happening.

In format, the EVANGELIST will change from a magazine to a newsletter. This means it will have fewer pages (12 to 16 instead of 24 to 28), shorter articles, and a different appearance (including a new logo, a slightly larger page size, and articles starting on the front cover).

And because it is important to communicate a unified vision to everyone in The Brethren Church, the EVANGELIST will be sent *without subscription fee* to every Brethren home. The cost of the magazine will be covered by Fair Share giving from local congregations to the denomination.

## Change is not new

Change is not new to the EVANGELIST. During its 117-year history, the magazine has undergone many modifications. It actually began—in 1878—as a *weekly*, four-page *newspaper* called *The Progressive Christian*. After the formation of The Brethren Church in 1883, the name of the paper was changed to *The Brethren's Evangelist*. Then in 1885 *Brethren's* was changed to just *Brethren*, and the name became what it is today. Sometime during the next ten years (we're not sure of the date) the number of pages was increased to 16, the size of the pages was reduced, and the denomination's *newspaper* became a *magazine*.

During the years that followed, various modifications were made in the appearance, format, number of pages, and page size of the EVANGELIST. A major change was made in 1957 when colored ink was added to the magazine on a regular basis.

From its beginning, the EVANGELIST had always been a weekly publication. But that changed too. In 1966 it became a bi-weekly, and ten years later it became a monthly.

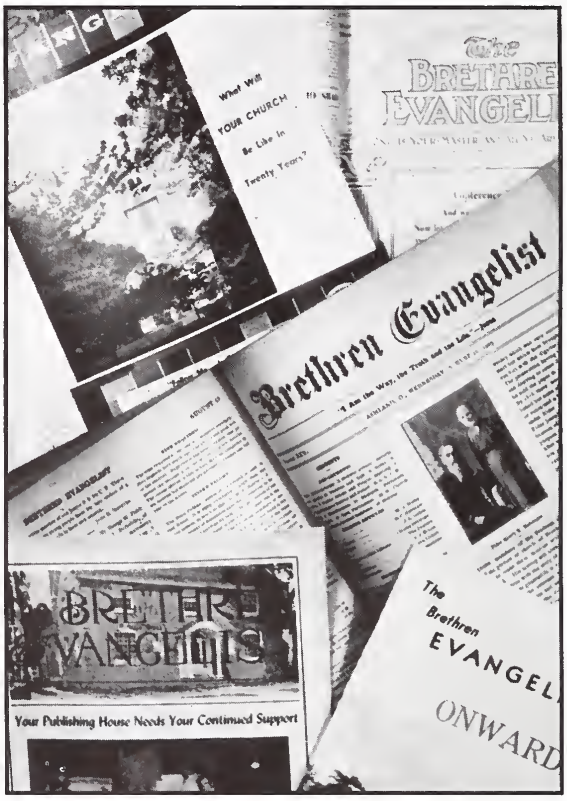
The present format of the EVANGELIST dates to October 1984. With that issue the page size was increased, a new logo was introduced, and three columns became the norm throughout the magazine. Some new features were also introduced at that time, among them a children's page, later named "The Little Crusader."

## An unprecedented change

Throughout the years since 1878, one thing has remained the same about the EVANGELIST. It has always been a paid-subscription magazine (although, as you can imagine, subscription rates have changed considerably over the years!). But even that is now going to change. Beginning in September, the magazine will be sent without subscription fee to all Brethren homes for which we have addresses. The only subscription fee will be for non-Brethren subscribers to the magazine and for gift subscriptions. As noted above, the reason for doing away with the subscription fee and sending the magazine to all Brethren homes is the desire to communicate a unified vision to every member of The Brethren Church.

## Change is necessary

In our fast-paced world, change is necessary. Institutions that do not adapt fail to meet the needs of society and become irrelevant. The Brethren Church must be willing to make changes as it prepares to meet the challenges of the Twenty-First Century. And THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST must change as well in order to better serve the church. Look for those changes to begin in the September issue. [⇧]




*Changes in the appearance of the EVANGELIST are illustrated by issues from 1903 (center), 1926 (top right), 1946 (bottom left), 1961 (top left), and 1976 (bottom right).*

*One result of the changes being made in the EVANGELIST in September will be the discontinuation of "The Little Crusader." Mrs. Sandi Rowsey, a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, has faithfully prepared this children's page for the past two years. The editor wishes to express publicly his appreciation to Mrs. Rowsey for her good work with this page.*

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THE BRETHREN Evangelist

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*by Sandi Rowsey*

The July–August ***Woman's Outlook Newsletter*** is in the center of this issue.

**Cover:** The theme logo for this year's General Conference, as for the past several Conferences, was designed by Robin Roberts, a graphic artist who is a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland. Special information about General Conference is found on pages 11–13 and on the back cover of this issue.

**This additional note** for Brethren attending Conference for the first time this year. You are invited (*and urged*) to attend a New Attenders Briefing, which will be held Monday, August 7, at 4:00 p.m.

**Answers to the Little Crusader page:**

There are many ways you could be a witness to family members—by being kind, showing love, telling them about Jesus, reading the Bible to them or with them, obeying your parents, living for Jesus, and so on.

You can show the love of Jesus by sharing your toys, being kind, showing forgiveness, by not fighting or saying mean things, and in other ways.

# Harvest of a Brief Life

By Ann Miller

THE BRIEF LIFE of Hannah Wright ushered in a spiritual harvest for the Carmel, Indiana, Brethren Church. Hannah, the third daughter of Carmel members Danny and Dawn Wright, lived only nine days (August 31 to September 8, 1994). She had holoprosencephaly, a condition in which less than one-fourth of her brain was developed.

God's comfort to Dan and Dawn came immediately. Two days after Hannah's birth, as the Wrights were struggling with the severity of Hannah's condition, their best friends, Kris and Donna Julius, walked into their house, sat on their couch, and asked to hear about Jesus.

"I never would have considered faith if I wasn't forced to by Hannah's condition," Kris said.

Dan stayed up most of that night telling them about Jesus and sharing the gospel. Dan and Dawn could see that their precious Hannah had been used by God to open the hearts of Kris and Donna to Jesus.

The church rallied around the Wrights during that difficult week of Hannah's brief life. Church members visited the hospital, took food to the home, sat with the Wrights in their living room. They shared tears, hugs, and even some laughter during the viewing and funeral for Hannah.

Steve Gasparino, a close friend of the Wrights, rocked on their front porch after the funeral while the church family milled about. He commented, "You Christians have a peace and joy I need desperately." He had been watching the Wrights and their church friends throughout the viewing and the funeral. He saw a marked difference between their attitude of hope and the utter devastation of the other mourners.

Later Dawn laughed and said, "I think every person from church witnessed to Steve that day!"

Greg Cahall had been attending Carmel Brethren through the encouragement of his wife, Barb. Something about little Hannah touched his heart as no earlier tragedy had. Neither Greg's Christian upbringing nor his wife's conversion several years earlier had caused him to come to Jesus. Little Hannah did.

Following the funeral pizza dinner, as Dan walked my husband, Pastor Jim Miller, out to his car, Dan said, "You know, Jim, I think Dawn and I are going to have to start a Bible study. . . ." First Steve, then Kris and Donna were saved as a result of that Bible study. Dawn says she can't get over the tremendous change in her friends.

During two weeks last October, Pastor Jim baptized ten people—three men and seven children. Then just when Pastor Jim thought he wouldn't be using the baptistry again for awhile, Mary Wertz—whom the Carmel church had loved and upheld in prayer for two years—told the congregation one Sunday morning that she had become a Christian. And Tom Fisher, who attends regularly with his family, chose to reaffirm his faith by being baptized, with Mary, on Easter Sunday.



*Dawn Wright with Hannah.*

Pastor Jim has decided to "leave the water in the baptistry." Three of his co-workers (Jim works full time as a bank teller in addition to serving as pastor) and I have begun an evangelistic Bible study. These co-workers, in turn, invited their manicurist to join the Bible study with them. Of those women, Robin Terrell was saved on May 10 and two of the others are seriously considering a relationship with Jesus.

Dan and Dawn and their children, Danielle (8) and Sarah (6), have experienced grieving and healing this year. They are expecting their fourth daughter in September.

The Carmel Brethren Church is expecting as well—expecting those they hope to see born again. [⇧]



*Danny and Dawn Wright with daughters Danielle (l.) and Sarah.*

*Mrs. Miller is a member of the Carmel, Ind., Brethren Church, where her husband, Jim, is the pastor.*

# Exposing the False Prophets

By Nancy Reese

*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.*
Matthew 7:15, 16; NIV

UNTIL RECENTLY, I thought that in these verses Jesus was talking about people who represent themselves as pastors and ministers who know and preach God's word, but who instead lead God's people astray. As I've grown in my walk with our Lord, however, I've discovered that Jesus' teaching about false prophets doesn't apply only to those who pass themselves off as pastors and ministers.

When I was a newlywed, my sister-in-law and I heard that the moon and stars symbol on the back of Proctor & Gamble products was a satanic symbol. As a Christian I felt that it wouldn't be appropriate for me to support that company by continuing to buy its products.

## A matter of fairness

But before boycotting the products, I felt that it was only fair to contact Proctor & Gamble to ask specifically what this symbol meant and to inform the company of my intentions to boycott its products if it was involved in the occult. A representative of the company sent me a very nice letter dispelling any rumors and explaining that the symbol came from shipping industries of more than 100 years ago.

Having gotten this information, I was certainly taken aback when, 14 years later, a Christian friend gave me a letter urging Christians to boycott all Proctor & Gamble products because of the company's occult practices!

I try to be very careful of what I get involved in and where I give financial support. I want to believe in the ministries I support. I want them to be ministries that God Himself is pleased with.

I have been called naive many times. I prefer to think of myself as hopeful and fair. But maybe it was my naiveté that caused me to investigate this rumor about Proctor & Gamble. Nevertheless, I felt that a company that was accused of being so blatant about its occult affiliations would certainly not be afraid to tell little ol' me the truth.

## Results of the investigation

Here are just a few of the things I learned through my investigation:

1. The letter claimed that on March 1, 1992, the president of Proctor & Gamble appeared on the Phil Donahue show and announced his association with the Church of Satan. But March 1, 1992, fell on a Sunday, and Donahue's show is not aired on Sunday.

2. The letter also claimed that "beginning in April" a symbol of ram's horns would begin appearing on Proctor & Gamble products. That was in 1992. That symbol has yet to appear. In fact, as I write this on June 6, 1995, there are *no symbols* on Proctor & Gamble products, not even the old moon and stars symbol.

3. The letter also claimed that a recent Merv Griffin show featured a group of cultists, of which one was the owner of Proctor & Gamble. Merv Griffin hasn't had a talk show for at least 12 years. Furthermore, Proctor & Gamble doesn't have one owner. It is owned by stockholders.

4. The letter gave an address to which a person could write for a transcript of the Donahue show. The address was incorrect.

I uncovered a wealth of information dispelling these rumors that Proctor & Gamble was involved in something satanic. **As a matter of fact,** William Proctor, the founder of Proctor and Gamble, was a devout Christian and an active Episcopalian, according to the VII Bishop William G. Black of Southern Ohio. He tithed his income before he and James Gamble ever produced their first bar of soap.

His grandson, William Cooper Proctor, continued this tradition by giving money and properties to the Diocese of Southern Ohio. And the endowments continue. A 1,100-acre farm donated in 1954 by his widow is now the Proctor Center, at which many of the diocesan conferences and programs are held.

## Know the facts

I do believe that Christians sometimes need to boycott businesses when the actions or affiliations of those businesses go directly against what we believe and profess. But before we get involved, it is very important that we know the facts. We depend on the

*(continued on page 7)*

### The Rumors Continue

The false rumors about the Proctor & Gamble Company are still not dead. They recently popped up again. Not only is it wrong to spread these rumors, it could also end you up in court. The June 1995 issue of *NAE Washington Insight* (a publication of the Office of Public Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals) reports that Proctor & Gamble has successfully prosecuted more than a dozen cases against persons who have spread the rumors.

*Mrs. Reese is a wife, mother of two children, and a first grade teacher. She is a member of the Oakville, Ind., First Brethren Church.*

# Brethren in the Early 20th Century

By Matthew W. Hamel

Because of their progressive outlook, early members of The Brethren Church were open to new kinds of ministry. In this quiz, we look at some of their pioneering efforts.

**1.** During the 1920s there was increased concern for the youth of The Brethren Church. One outgrowth of this concern was the beginning of the summer camping program. The first Brethren camp was located in this state:

Pennsylvania. Go to 10.

Indiana. Go to 5.

**2.** Si, señor/señora! Since 1909, when Charles F. Yoder began Brethren Mission work in Argentina, The Brethren Church has maintained a presence in that country. Born in Wayne County, Ohio, Yoder proved to be an important person in the denomination. He turned down a teaching position at his alma mater, the University of Chicago, to become editor of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST in 1903. In addition to serving as editor, he also taught classes occasionally at Ashland College and served as secretary of the Foreign Missionary Society from 1903 to ca. 1906. Ease over to 8.



*Charles F. Yoder*

*Mr. Hamel, a member of the Johnstown, Pa., Second Brethren Church, currently lives in Ashland, Ohio, and attends the new Brethren Church of Medina. Mr. Hamel wishes to acknowledge the encouragement and editorial assistance of Dr. Dale Stoffer and the editor in preparing this series of quizzes on Brethren history.*

**3.** Another Brethren congregation that merged with a local Church of the Brethren group is located in this Iowa city:

Waterloo. Go to 16.

Lanark. Go to 19.

**4.** Whoa, partner! The oldest congregation in Arizona is the Tucson First Brethren Church, which was organized in 1951 by the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. Git along to 20.

**5.** Good! The first Brethren church camp was held in 1927 on the shores of Lake Shipshewana, on land donated by interested members. Now known as Indiana Brethren Retreat, the facility is used year-round for a variety of programs. Hike to 21.

**6.** Following the organization of The Brethren Church in 1883, concerned members began to pledge support for an urban mission in this city:

Chicago. Go to 11.

Washington. Go to 14.

**7.** Good job! The Falls City Church was organized in 1867. Following the 1882–83 division, Progressive members purchased the building from the Conservative (Church of the Brethren) faction. The two groups joined again in 1947 as the Falls City First Brethren Church. Go to 3.

**8.** Brethren also heeded the call to "Go West!" The first Brethren congregations in the land of tumbleweed were located in this state:

Arizona. Go to 4.

Wyoming. Go to 20.

**9.** Not quite. Yonan Y. Auraham, a native of Iran (Persia), came to the United States to study. While here, he joined The Brethren Church and was recruited to work in his homeland. He returned to Iran in 1903 with Brethren support, but plans to send Brethren missionaries to work with him were later abandoned due to civil unrest in that land. Travel on to 2.

**10.** Whoops! The camping program in the Keystone State began in 1933, six years after the one in Indiana. Camp Juniata, as it was called, was held at various rented locations. The Pennsylvania District's current camp (Peniel) is located on the former homestead of John Meyers (founder of nearby Meyersdale), and was purchased in 1962. Backtrack to 5.

**11.** It's your kind of town! It's also the correct answer! The Chicago Mission was started in 1896 by John McFaden and Sadie Gibbons. Blow on over to 18.

**12.** Progressive Brethren congregations were begun in the Plains States shortly after the 1883 division. The First Brethren Church at Falls City, Nebraska, is notable for this reason:

It was destroyed by natural disaster. Go to 15.

It merged with a local Church of the Brethren congregation. Go to 7.

**13.** Afraid not. The "walking preacher" was *Jacob* Leatherman, who lived nearly a century earlier. To keep preaching appointments during his 56 years of ministry, Jacob walked an estimated 20,000 miles. Walk, don't run, to 17.

**14.** Sorry! The Washington congregation was not the result of an urban mission. It was begun by several progressive members of a local German Baptist Brethren congregation and was formally chartered in 1901. See 11.

**15.** You blew it! The Falls City Church was not destroyed, but its

neighboring congregation in Carleton, Nebr., lost its building to a tornado in 1908. A new building was constructed, but that burned down in 1911. A third building was erected in 1912. Sometime after 1980, the congregation disbanded. Scoot over to 7.

**16.** Right on! The Waterloo, Iowa, First Brethren Church merged with the City Church of the Brethren in Waterloo on January 3, 1993. Known as the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church, it now ministers to the community with a common purpose. Move on to 22.

**17.** Yes indeed! N. V. Leatherman pastored churches in Pennsylvania, Indiana, California, and Maryland, and was known by many for his work with the Young Men and Boys Brotherhood. He also served for more than 20 years as secretary of the National Sunday School Association of The Brethren Church. Move on to 6.

**18.** Foreign Missions were also a priority for the newly organized Brethren Church. Shortly after the turn of the century, Brethren began working in this country:

Iran (Persia). Go to 9.

Argentina. Go to 2.

**19.** Lanark is in Illinois. Try 16.

**20.** Right on, partner! The Cheyenne First Brethren Church began in 1944 under the supervision of Pastor Frank Garber, with Sunday school being held in the homes of members. Migrate to 12.

**21.** The father of the camping program in Pennsylvania was Rev. N. Victor Leatherman. For his leadership within the denomination he was known as:

"The Walking Preacher." Go to 13.

"Mr. Brethren Church." Go to 17.

**22.** Congratulations! You've finished this whirlwind tour of Brethren history!

### For further reading:


Articles in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed. Philadelphia, PA and Oak Brook, IL: The Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1983.

Freeman Ankrum. *Sidelights on Brethren History*. Elgin: The Brethren Press, 1962.

Henry R. Holsinger. *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church*. Oakland, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1901.

Albert T. Ronk. *History of the Brethren Church*. Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Co., 1968.

Charles F. Yoder, *God's Means of Grace*. Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1908.


## False Prophets

*(continued from page 5)*

Holy Spirit to write the truth on our hearts. We count on Him to tell us what is true and what is false. We can rely on the same Holy Spirit to give us discernment when we are investigating rumors.

When we spread false rumors or base our actions on such rumors, we make all Christians look foolish. Are we guilty of being false prophets by blindly following others and letting them do our thinking for us?

How do we get caught up in these false rumors? One reason we do so is because we forget that our leaders are human. Because they represent God, we accept their words without evaluating them carefully. A second reason we are deceived is because some individuals or groups purposely begin rumors that cause others to suffer in order to further their own cause. To give these rumors greater credibility, they will tack on the name of a person or organization for whom Christians have great respect.

How can we protect ourselves from being deceived and from passing along false rumors and becoming involved in unjustified boycotts?

(1) Let us remember that our faith should not be in humans but only in the Lord. Look to the Lord alone for your guidance, and you will find truth and only truth.

(2) Know the word of God and evaluate what you hear from your pulpits and on your radios and televisions by that word. Are they speaking the truths of the Lord? Hold them accountable for what they are preaching.

(3) Contact the organizations and individuals who are distributing the letters and making the allegations. Ask them for proof of their charges. Keep investigating until you get to the origin of the letters.

(4) Most importantly, **pray** that God will show you the **truth.**

I am not a personal friend of anyone at Proctor & Gamble, nor do I own stock in the company. I am not an investigative reporter, and I certainly do not have an overabundance of logical reasoning skills. (My husband will attest to that!) I uncovered all of these facts about Proctor & Gamble by using my head. You could have gotten the same information by calling the toll-free number that is listed on the back of all Proctor & Gamble products.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to uncover truth. Let us pray that we will have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts that are pure. The Holy Spirit will honor that prayer by revealing His truth to us. [⇧]

### Let's Be Wise

Another falsehood that keeps resurfacing is that Madalyn Murray O'Hair is petitioning the Federal Communications Commission to remove all religious broadcasts from the airwaves. This is untrue now as it has been since 1975! Yet zealous Christians have sent thousands and thousands of letters in protest of the non-existent petition to the Federal Communications Commission, thus making Christians look exceedingly foolish (and undoubtedly trying the patience of those who work at the FCC!).

If you have questions about rumors, allegations, or boycotts of this kind, contact Ron Waters at The Brethren Church National Office (419-289-1708); or call the NAE Office of Public Affairs (202-789-1011). Ask *before* you sign (or copy or distribute)!

Jesus told His disciples that they were to be as wise as snakes and as harmless as doves (Matt. 10:16). Let us not be a bunch of venomous birdbrains instead!



Understanding the Bible

# Jesus Our Example

By Brenda B. Colijn

THE BIBLE says that Jesus is not only our Lord and Savior but also our example. John declares, "This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did" (1 John 2:5–6.* The *Centennial Statement* (p. 5) directs Brethren to "the teaching and example of Jesus and the apostles" as our standard to follow. *How Brethren Understand God's Word* extends this idea to interpreting the Bible, stating, "The Brethren were guided in all their interpretations by the teaching and example of Christ and the apostles" (p. 9).

But what does it mean that Jesus is our example in interpreting the Bible? As I have reflected on this question, I have concluded that to follow Jesus' example, we should approach Scripture as He did, live Scripture as He did, and apply Scripture as He did.

## Approaching Scripture

To approach Scripture as Jesus did, we must acknowledge its inspiration, its authority, and its Christ-centered focus. Jesus affirmed that Scripture (which for Him was the Old Testament) was completely true, trustworthy, and authoritative. He described the Old Testament as God's word and said that the Law would never pass away until it had all been accomplished (Matt. 5:18; 15:6). He identified God's word with truth and declared that the Scriptures cannot be broken (John 17:17; 10:35).

In debating with the Pharisees about the Old Testament teaching on divorce, however, Jesus distinguished between regulations that met people where they were and principles intended for all time. He argued that Scripture should be interpreted according to God's highest intentions: "Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate. . . . Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning" (Matt. 19:6, 8). Following Jesus' example will mean that we will submit ourselves to Scripture and try to understand it as God intends.

Jesus knew that He was the culmination of God's revelation and that all of Scripture pointed to Him (Luke 24:25–27; John 5:39–40). He understood Scripture in that light. He put His own words on a level with the Old Testament, saying that they would never pass away (Matt. 24:35).

He even claimed the right to refocus Old Testament teaching, including the Ten Commandments: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment" (Matt. 5:21–22). When He was accused of Sabbath-breaking, He told the Pharisees, "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8).

Although the New Testament documents hadn't yet been written during Jesus' earthly ministry, the same principle applies to them. We understand them in light of the revelation in Jesus, and we use His teaching and His example as a guide when we interpret them.

In some evangelical churches, preaching and teaching focuses much more on Paul than on Jesus. Paul was certainly an inspired and faithful interpreter of Jesus, but he would have been the last one to want to take our focus away from Christ! He told the Corinthians, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

## Living Scripture

To live Scripture as Jesus did, we must immerse ourselves in it. Jesus didn't just know Scripture; He lived it every day. He saw His life and ministry in a scriptural framework, and He saw His own identity in terms of the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. For example, at the start of His ministry, He read Isaiah 61:1–2 in the synagogue at Nazareth and then declared, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:16–21). As His passion approached, He told His disciples, "It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment" (Luke 22:37; see Is. 53:12).

He used Scripture in His teaching and in His debates with religious leaders. For example, He rebuked the Sadducees: "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). He also used Scripture to give Him strength and to

*Quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version.*

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***"When we apply the Bible, we can look for ways to follow our Lord by putting His words and actions into practice. When we encounter a difficult situation, we can ask ourselves the old question, 'What would Jesus do?' "***

express His deepest feelings during the most critical times of His life, including His temptation and His crucifixion (Matt. 4:4–11; 27:46).

Our lives, of course, are not the fulfillment of Old Testament messianic prophecies! But we can follow Jesus' example by immersing ourselves in Scripture as He did. We can draw our identity from the biblical revelation of who we are in God's sight. We can receive guidance from Scripture for our own ministries. We can use it in witnessing. We can study it, meditate upon it, and memorize it so that it will stand ready to support and comfort us in our trials.

We can live Scripture in companionship with the Holy Spirit, that Counselor whom Jesus sent to be with us in His stead (John 14:16–17). As "another Counselor" (a Counselor like Jesus), the Spirit does for us what Jesus would do if He were here bodily. As we read Scripture in prayerful reliance upon the Holy Spirit's counsel, we can expect Him to have His way in our lives, drawing us closer to God and forming us into Christ's likeness.

In one of my favorite passages from the early Brethren (which I have quoted before in this series), an anonymous eighteenth-century writer urged the Brethren to live out the Scriptures so that "the entire life of the reader becomes a living letter of God in which one can read all the commandments of Jesus Christ."

### Applying Scripture

To apply Scripture as Jesus did, we must read the Bible as His disciples. We can open our Bibles asking a simple question—What does our Master want of us?—and waiting expectantly for an answer.

We will not rest content with head knowledge but will push on farther to heart knowledge and obedience. Jesus was always concerned with the heart. He taught that the pure in heart would see God (Matt. 5:8). He said that the contents of our hearts will overflow in our speech (Luke 6:43–45). Jesus Himself lived a life of perfect obedience to His Father's will (John 8:28–29; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:8–9). He expects the same of us, His disciples: "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). He chided the crowd: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46).

When we apply the Bible, we can look for ways to follow our Lord by putting His words and actions into practice. When we encounter a difficult situation, we can ask ourselves the old question, "What would Jesus do?" If we spend time with Him in Scripture and in prayer, we're more likely to know the answer to that question.

Following Jesus in obedience to Scripture will often take us in directions that are contrary to the values of our culture. Jesus predicted that the world would hate us (John 15:18–20). Most of us in this culture haven't experienced that hatred as intensely as the first disciples did. Sometimes, in fact, we may get so comfortable in the world that we need Jesus' reminder that we can't serve two masters (Matt. 6:24).

But following Jesus as our Lord and our example gives greater rewards than the world can offer. We have His presence, His guidance, and the promise of eternal life with Him. And as we follow Him in loving discipleship, we have the assurance that when we are fully trained, we will be like our Master (Luke 6:40). [⇧]

## Baptism: A Personal Testimony

By Alberta Holsinger

WHEN I WAS TWELVE we lived in a small town where I attended a Methodist Church. After participating in the pastor's class that spring, one Sunday morning I was baptized by sprinkling (believer's baptism) and received into church membership.

We moved frequently. In each community my membership transferred into a different denomination.

Then I returned to my home town of Ashland, Ohio, to attend college. My family background was Church of the Brethren, and that was the church I chose to attend.

After a time the pastor talked with me about church membership. He explained to me that I would need to be baptized by trine immersion.

"But I have been baptized," I responded. "Baptism is a symbol, and I don't think I need to be baptized again."

"I understand," the pastor answered. "We are happy to have you worship with us, and we would be very pleased to have you as a member."

Eventually I wanted to teach in the children's department. As I thought about it, I realized I would need to teach baptism by trine immersion. How could I do that if I had not experienced it? I needed to teach by example as well as by words.

One unforgettable Sunday evening I was baptized by trine immersion. The joy of that moment is indescribable. My sins were buried through Christ's death, and I was raised to new life in Him. I felt it. I knew it.

This year at General Conference we are to discuss the possibility of receiving into membership Christians who have experienced any form of believers' baptism. Should I disagree and perhaps exclude some fine Christians from membership in our church? Should I agree and thereby prevent someone from experiencing the joy that comes through immersion? I don't know.

All I know is that I'm very thankful the church did not have a lenient baptismal policy for me. If it had, I would have been denied one of the greatest blessings of my life. [⇧]

*Mrs. Holsinger, a long-time member of The Brethren Church and former Brethren pastor's wife, is a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren congregation.*

# The Form and Meaning of Baptism

By Brenda B. Colijn

I HAVE BEEN MOVED to respond to Rev. Emery Hurd's article in the June EVANGELIST, "A Defense of Believer Immersion as a Standard for Membership in The Brethren Church." (Rev. Hurd's article was itself a response to an article by Dr. Dale Stoffer in the April EVANGELIST.) I appreciate and commend Rev. Hurd's desire to be biblical and to be obedient—both of which commitments are very Brethren. However, I believe that some of the connections he makes confuse the issue rather than illuminate it. In particular, I want to address the issues of form as a "communication of principles," baptism as an "indicative form," and baptism's biblical meaning.

### Principles and Indicative Forms

Forms are not arbitrary; they are chosen because they communicate meaning. Rev. Hurd argues that our form of baptism should communicate the biblical principles of baptism, and I agree. (Dr. Stoffer made the same argument in his article.) When we baptize, we should use the form of baptism that best communicates the biblical meaning of the rite. I believe this form to be trine immersion. However, the issue before us is not what form of baptism we will practice, but under what conditions we will accept other believers into full fellowship (that is, membership).

Rev. Hurd's category of "indicative forms" goes much further than his argument about form as a communication of principles. I have not encountered the concept of indicative forms in my reading in biblical interpretation. But if I understand Rev. Hurd correctly, he believes that indicative forms are "essential to the communication of the principles" they express. He regards immersion as "essential to the communication of the principles of baptism," which he describes as cleansing from sin.

If, as Rev. Hurd argues, "baptism *is* immersion," then the immersion form is essential to the performance of the ordinance. Without the form, a valid ordinance has not been performed. Let's be very clear about what we are saying if we take this position. We are saying to people who have been baptized by other forms of believer baptism that *they have not been baptized.* We are saying, in fact, that those homebound and hospitalized Brethren who have been baptized by other forms *have not been baptized.*

The early Anabaptists were willing to say that infant baptism was no baptism at all, but merely a "water bath," and they were willing to die for that position—as many of them did. But do we want to say the same about other forms of believer baptism?

The biblical and historical evidence certainly supports the conclusion that immersion is the preferred form of baptism. But it does not support immersion as an indicative form. If immersion were essential to the performance of the ordinance, it would be directly commanded in Scripture. And if immersion were an indicative form, the *Didache* (representing the practice of the early church) would not have accepted other forms *under any circumstances.* People in the first century could have traveled to find water for immersion, if that were essential to baptism. But the *Didache,* while it prefers immersion, accepts other forms if immersion is not convenient.

### Biblical Meaning

Rev. Hurd states that the biblical meaning of baptism is "an act of burial and resurrection, a symbol of a new life in Christ, and a work of each of the three persons of the Trinity." He also notes that it expresses cleansing from sin. As we consider people who have received Jesus Christ as saving Lord and have publicly confessed Him as such through believer baptism, do we believe that those people possess new life in Christ? Have they been cleansed from their sins? Are they members of the body of Christ? If they are, in fact, alive in Christ, cleansed from sin, and members of Christ's body, and they have publicly testified to this through their previous baptism, why should we ask them to perform an action that is, for them, completely divorced from its biblical meaning?

Baptism is not something we do to mark significant life events. Scripture is clear that baptism is a once-for-all identification of the believer with Christ and with His church. I am concerned that by asking people to be rebaptized, we are essentially asking them to deny Christ's earlier work in their lives.

The argument based on church membership also concerns me—that is, the idea that people who want to affiliate with The Brethren Church should subscribe to the form of baptism that we practice as a condition of membership. The New Testament and the early church knew nothing of this concept of church membership. It wasn't necessary until the development of denominations. In the early church, people expressed their commitment to Christ and His church through baptism. I understand that our changed situation makes something like formal church membership necessary. But we should not use a New Testament ordinance, divorced from its biblical meaning, in the service of a man-made custom.

### Forms and Principles Again

As we work through this issue together, we must be biblical—but we must also decide in this instance what being biblical means. Both Rev. Hurd and Dr. Stoffer want to be biblical. Rev. Hurd wants to be biblical by obeying Scripture at the level of form, while Dr. Stoffer wants to be biblical by obeying Scripture at the level of principle. Whether to obey principle or form is the critical issue when we try to apply Scripture.

There are times when obeying a form would mean distorting or denying the principle it is intended to express. For example, a conservative Mennonite student at Ashland Seminary told me about an experience of his father, who is in prison ministry. His father believed that Christians are commanded to practice the holy kiss with one another, men with men and women with women (see Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14). However, he was forced to decide that practicing the holy kiss in the prison environment, where homosexuality was common, would distort the meaning of that practice. So the Christian inmates developed another greeting that would express a warm family connection without communicating any sexual meaning. This may seem a strange example to some of us Progressive Brethren, who long ago decided to obey the holy kiss in principle (with a hug or a handshake) rather than in form.

The issue before us seems, to me, another instance in which requiring the form would distort the biblical meaning. I am reminded of the discussion of principles and forms that took place at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, a discussion of the circumstances under which the Gentiles would be received into full fellowship. I want us to be sure that we receive people on the same grounds God does. Let us be biblical—and let us not impose unnecessary burdens on those "Gentiles" who are coming to us. [✝]

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*Dr. Colijn is a member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church in Worthington, Ohio, and an adjunct professor at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

# The Woman's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Woman's Missionary Society

July–August 1995 Volume 8, Number 6

## The President's Pen

Dear Ladies,

What a beautiful time of year! It is so nice to wake up in the morning to the sun shining in the bedroom window. I love to hear the birds singing as I try to talk myself into getting out of bed.

We have a lot of birds in our yard and every year they insist on building their nests on my side porch. We have our grill, table, and chairs out there and we use it a lot in the nice weather. So the birds "kinda" interfere with that. We take the nests down, they build them again. I did not realize they can build a nest in such a short time. I keep telling them we have trees in our yard and they can build their nests there, but they like the porch. They just do not give up!

Wouldn't it be great if we were that determined when witnessing to those without Christ. We give up too easily. I've said before that a favorite saying of my husband is "Talk to God about man before you talk to man about God." Too many of us talk to God about a friend or family member without Christ, but then we "forget" to talk to man about God.

As Christians, we need to always be ready to witness, either by voice or by our actions. I read of a missionary who was returning home after many years in New Guinea. He said that when he first arrived there, he found that the people seemed utterly devoid of moral sense. If a mother was carrying her little one and the baby began to cry, she would throw it into the ditch and let it die. If a man saw his father break his leg, he would leave him by the roadside to suffer by himself. They had no compassion whatsoever. That would be very hard for us to comprehend, wouldn't it?

When asked what the missionary did for them, he replied, "I thought it best to show them my faith by my works. When I saw a baby crying, I picked it up and consoled it. When I saw a man with a broken leg, I sought

*(continued on page 4)*

## An Update From Malaysia

May 9, 1995

Greetings to you in the Lord and from Malaysia.

We have the pleasure of writing to you. It is our great joy to serve our Lord and The Brethren Church in our homeland.

Our two children are big now, especially Stephen. He is a young man and he will be 18 by May 17. He anticipates to study music at Ashland University (OH) in the fall of 1995. He passed in the upper secondary level (Malaysian Certificate of Education) last November. He plays the violin and piano; presently he is a part-time music teacher at Yamaha Music School. He teaches violin and helps to teach the Ashland Kindergarten at Selesa Jaya in the mornings.

Rebecca is 10 years old and she is a 4th grader at Tun Aminah Elementary School. As far as possible, the Malaysian Government has provided free elementary education for all citizens of this country. The six years of elementary education in Malaysia is aimed at providing a good foundation for children in the 3 R's; i.e., a proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic. And the school uses Malay language as the medium of instruction.

I (Jenny) am still working at the Johor Specialist Hospital. Presently I am acting as a Head Nurse of the Maternity Unit. I have never been interested in the administration. However, I will give it a try. I have yet to get used to this new post—long working hours and frequent meetings. I still prefer bedside nursing.

I help David with teaching the children Sunday school, which is held on Saturdays. Sundays used to be working days and school days. That was why we have children's hour on Saturdays. Since 1994, when Johor Baru became a city, Sunday became an official day off. But we still hold it on Saturdays because most people want to have a day out with the family on Sundays.

I work a full day on Sundays and take turns with the members to lead the Sunday evening worship. Some evenings, David and I make house calls to the members. Saturday is my rest day.

David is teaching kindergarten in the mornings and teaches English tuition class two evenings a week. He also acts as a driver to fetch and send the kindergarten children, tuition class children. David works seven days a week. On top of the church work in Johor Baru, he also oversees the mission work in Penang.

David's mum is doing quite well in her 73 years of age. She helps a lot in household chores, even though she has some of the old age ailments—pains and aches in arms, hands, and legs. In many ways, she is still very fit and strong. We really thank the Lord for her.

Romans 8:28: *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* I love this verse because on countless occasions, I find it so true. God loves each one of us. Many times when a certain thing happens, we often wonder why it is so. We do not understand why it has to happen. Only when it turns out to be a blessing in disguise do we realize God is in charge of all things.

On April 26, as I was sleeping (I was on night duty), suddenly there was an electricity cut at 12 noon. I woke up feeling very hot. Since I couldn't sleep due to the heat, I got up. It was a good day with bright sunshine. Within ten minutes, the sky became cloudy and darkened. Soon it started to rain. I am so thankful that God brought rain to cool down the surroundings, so I was able to sleep from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. And the electricity was put back on at 5 p.m. Isn't God great!

We are very short of manpower in the mission field. As both David Chew and David Loi are getting on in years,

*(continued on page 4)*

## READING CIRCLE BOOKS



When the Executive Board of the WMS met May 6, one of the items of business was to choose books for you to read this next year. The usual process is for several ladies to read a variety of books and make their comments; the best of their choices are recommended to the WMS officers. From perhaps 15–20 choices, the following seven are suggested to you. The goal is for each member to read two books; however, you and I know that if we can read more than the minimum, we will be benefited more.

The resumé of each book is given by Kathleen Mack, literature secretary.

Books will be available at General Conference.

HEARTBEAT by Jill Briscoe; $6.50.

Beautiful selections of Jill Briscoe's own poems, prayers, and richly worded meditations will enrich and inspire your devotional life. Come—celebrate the heartbeat of life! Mrs. Briscoe will be the WMS luncheon speaker and will autograph her books.

THE FRIENDSHIPS OF WOMEN by Dee Brestin; $8.50.

Dee will make you cry and laugh as she takes a close look at the power and pain in female relationships.

THE BLUEBIRD AND THE SPARROW by Janette Oke; $8.50.

There were moments when she wished she were an only child, that her mother had never blessed her with a baby sister—like Glenna, but the day will come when Berta must look into her heart and discover what truly makes the distance between them.

BRUCHKO by Bruce Olson; $8.50.

This remarkable account of Bruce Olson and his adventure in the jungles of South America is one of the most significant missionary stories of our generation. This is a highly recommended book on missions.

ESAU by James R. Shott; $6.50.

Esau has a reputation for being the gullible, violent victim of his brother Jacob, who stole Esau's birthright. Or was he, as this dramatic novel suggests, considerably more complex?

NO WONDER THEY CALL HIM THE SAVIOR by Max Lucado; $11.50.

It all comes down to one thing: "When your life feels hollow, what can fill it with meaning? If someone asks

*(continued on page 4)*

# Missionary Miscellany

Mark and Chantal Logan will leave in August for missionary service in Africa. This summer they attended the Philadelphia training school and were commissioned by the Bethlehem (VA) Brethren Church. They will serve with the Eastern Mennonite Mission with assistance from the Brethren Missionary Board. Pray for their adjustment and ministry.

Dave and Diane Kerner returned to the States in June, concluding their missionary service in Colombia, South America. Dave plans to attend graduate school. Their temporary address is with Diane's family: c/o O'Leary, 4308 20th Street, Rockford, Illinois 61109.

Tim and Jan Eagle concluded their 2-year term in Mexico City. Pray for God's guidance in their future plans.

Todd and Tracy Ruggles will be on a 3-month furlough, which includes General Conference. They will return to Mexico City in the fall.

Juan Carlos and María Miranda are the July missionaries-of-the-month. Juan serves part-time as director of Latin American ministries and María's radio program, "Para Ti Mujer," continues to minister to 23 Spanish-speaking nations. The radio program is supported by Fuller Evangelistic Association and offerings from The Brethren Church. Your gift may be sent to the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, 524 College Avenue, Ashland, OH 44805, and designated for María's radio ministry.

The August missionaries are Daniel and Kathy Rosales, pastoring the Spanish congregation in Sarasota, Florida. This spring Daniel held a series of evangelistic outreach services in Colombia. First-time commitments and reconsecrations totaled 91!

Continue prayers and encouragement notes to those involved in the STAKE program in Florida.

Frequently we don't know how to pray for our missionary friends. Just pray, and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.



## DO YOU REMEMBER - - - ?

— The alumni of Riverside Christian School are planning an auction of items for their Homecoming weekend October 21. You are invited to participate by sending your contributions to Riverside Christian School, Lost Creek, KY 41348, and mark it for the Alumni Auction.

— Reports of your society's activities may be sent to me anytime. This is one responsibility of the corresponding secretary.

— Please do not send your offerings directly to Ashland Theological Seminary. This fouls up the bookkeeping! Like all offerings, the Seminary offering should be sent to Joanne Kroft, 608 Twp. Rd. 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805. She will record your society's gift and then process it properly to ATS.

— One item of business at Conference is consideration of Constitution revisions. Bring your suggestions with you.

— The national project offerings will help to pay the tuition costs for the Malaysian men in seminary training. Read Jenny Loi's letter. This is the second year for the project; the total goal is $25,000.

— Pray for the General Conference and the auxiliaries, officers, leaders, travelers, and weather.

— The thank-offerings are designated for world and home missions, Riverside Christian School, Campus Ministry, the Seminary, and the Ashland University scholarship.

— One objective of the WMS, according to the Constitution, is to raise funds for enlarging the borders of the church. We have given generously. Think what more we can do!


THE WOMAN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Woman's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

Subscription price, $7.50 per year in advance.

Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

# District Doings

The OHIO WMS CONFERENCE was one part of an inspirational district conference held March 11 in Smithville. Members and guests who registered totaled 33. Lois Barnhart, vice president, welcomed the ladies and explained that Patti Bub, president, recently moved to Michigan. Prior to moving, however, Patti planned this meeting and left her records in good order.

Joanne Kroft presented the devotions entitled "Pray? Why Not?" The following officers were elected:

President — Wanda Powell
Vice President — Lois Barnhart
Secretary-Treasurer — DeAnn Oburn
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer — Joanne Kroft

Wanda's address is: 9 Oakwood, Beloit, OH 44609.

The project will continue to be support for the Medina Church. Last year, in addition to offerings, some ladies helped with the "Phones for You" campaign and in being part of the core group. The recommended Bible study will be in Psalms.

Lois announced the fall retreat will be at Camp Bethany October 13–14. The 1996 spring rallies will be in Ashland Park Street and West Alexandria.

At a recent MILLEDGEVILLE BRETHREN BEACONS meeting, Viola Workman asked each member to write her age on a paper. This was a survey to see how many years of experience and wisdom were accumulated in their society. Here are the results for the 17 members present: 5 members in their 80s tallied 416 years; 9 members in their 70s grossed 632 years; 3 young ones managed 170 years. The grand total is 1,268 years! Consider the mentoring these ladies have accomplished, and they aren't finished yet!

On the National Day of Prayer, May 4, the MILLEDGEVILLE PRISCILLA CIRCLE hosted the community prayer breakfast in their church. Following breakfast, all the community churches held 12-hour prayer vigils.

The HUNTINGTON Mother and Daughter dinner and program were held at the church May 11. The dinner menu was cook's choice—each lady brought her favorite dish. Greetings were given by Olive Teusch and the response was by her daughter, Shirley Bruce. Helen Dickson offered the prayer for the meal; Ruth Keplinger and Wanda Armantrout awarded table decorations and other small gifts to mothers and daughters whose name tags carried the lucky numbers drawn. Nina Pressler was the grand prize winner. To qualify, she identified the most baby pictures of Brethren women. Some were more than 80 years old!

Special music was given by Pat Lusch and her daughter, Marjorie Teusch; and Marcia Forrester and her daughters, Katie and Darcy, accompanied by Marcia's mother-in-law, Mildred Forrester.

Cindi Stout of Burlington was the guest speaker. With her suitcase of items representing her life, she took the audience on a "Journey Through Womanhood."

She began with a teddy bear from her childhood; then spoke of her parents' divorce; during Girl Scout camp at age 12, she was led to the Lord by a teenager. A miniature bride and groom represented her marriage, then a diaper for her family, and a Bible, which she used as a textbook in raising children. "Make daily devotions a part of your life," she advised her audience. Cindi showed a picture album of her family and told of the importance of spending quality time with the children together and each child alone.

She gave good advice to the teenagers. "When you think of a boyfriend, list the qualities you want him to have. At the top should be this qualification: *He must be a Christian who wants to grow spiritually.* Cindi concluded by recommending that each one make new friends, always asking God to lead you.

THE ASHLAND PARK STREET societies—Faith, Hope, Joy—invited the Garber ladies to be their guests for the mothers and daughters dinner on May 1. Shirley Black was the mistress of ceremonies. Janeille Ditlevson presented awards to the oldest grandmother, the youngest daughter, the newest mother, the daughter who lost her tooth most recently, the teenager wearing what she made, and the youngest grandmother with her granddaughter present. The awards were crafted by Bev Summy and Laura Mae Riffle.

Kay Schumaker, chalk artist, presented the program "From Buds to Blossoms." She spoke of the buds in our homes—the children who will grow into blossoms for God under the proper conditions. The seed for growth is God's Word, watered with prayer. Pruning is the process God uses to draw us closer to Him; we need God's strength in our lives.

With appropriate taped music, Kay drew a beautiful pastoral scene reminding us of Psalm 23 "by the still waters." Then, with black light, the face of Jesus was illuminated, showing Him as the Good Shepherd.

The ladies of the LOUISVILLE BRETHREN BIBLE CHURCH entertained 50 ladies for the Northeast Ohio Spring Rally April 1. It was really an April Foolish day—snow flurries outside but spring-like inside. We were color-coordinated for the day. The pastel checked flowers on the name tags matched the table decorations and favors for lunch. "All the Children of the World" was the theme for the day.

Betty Brown, director of the Stark County Pregnancy Support Center, gave an enlightening report of that Center's activities. Mrs. Brown is a strong, positive, Christian lady and that is the foundation for the Support Center. They offer each client emotional, spiritual, and material support. They strive for prevention, intervention, and reconciliation.

Their preventive educational teams are high school and college-age students who present programs in middle schools. Mrs. Brown knew this program has helped to reduce the number of clients from the peak of 1,800 in one year to 1,500 the following year.

Other activities of the Support Center include the shepherding homes and post-abortion counseling and education (PEACE) programs. They are objectives toward the goal of developing women to be what God wants them to be.

Karen Moran, president, welcomed the ladies; special music during the day was given by the ladies ensemble and a solo, "Through the Eyes of a Child," was sung by Elaine Kerkstetter.

Wanda Powell, the Ohio president, received the project offering, which is assistance for the Medina Church. When the representative from each society gave the offering, she reported some of their activities during the year. These included: *Guidepost* subscriptions for shut-ins; mitten and sock tree for Lost Creek; serving the men

*(continued on page 4)*

# LOOK!

In the WMS directory (January–February 1995), please correct the zip code for Joan Merrill. It should be 47302.

Phyllis Meyer, the Wabash, Indiana, president, lives at 5866 W. 200 S, Lot 30, Wabash 46992.

### The President's Pen (continued)

to mend it. When I found people distressed and hungry, I took them in, comforted them, and fed them." When they finally inquired, "What does this mean? Why are you doing this for us?" the missionary had his chance, and he preached the gospel! When asked if he succeeded, he replied, "When I returned home on furlough, I left a church."

Isn't that an exciting story! Ephesians 2:8–9 makes it clear that our own poor human efforts can never save us. We need to keep close to the Lord and He will always be there to guide us and help us. Read Titus 3:8 and then ask yourself, "How well do I witness by my works?"

For most of you, by the time you read this, plans will be nearly completed for conference in Ashland and, in your society, you will be planning for a new year in your WMS groups. I trust you are all looking forward to doing something exciting and worthwhile in your WMS group.

God Bless You,
Shirley Black

### District Doings (continued)

and boys dinner; meeting at Brethren Care in Ashland and serving ice cream cones for refreshments; making and selling apple dumplings and vegetable soup; sending gifts to Kerners; helping with the "Phones for You" in Medina; white elephant and garage sales; supporting a Campus Crusade worker; making crafts for the Riverside School auction in October; providing supplies in a pregnancy center; adopt-a-family; financial support for an Indian pastor and children in the orphanage; contributions to a home for the blind, Salvation Army and Associated Charities; giving bingo prizes for Brethren Care; exchanging Christmas ornaments; sending recipes, magazines, and books to the Ruggles and Eagles in Mexico City; bake/make and exchange love gifts; and secret sisters.

One special feature was exchanging prayer requests. Special forms "I ask your prayers for" were received before lunch and distributed after lunch.

## An Update From Malaysia

(continued)

we desperately need young people to help in the mission work and to take over the field eventually. We have two youths who had dedicated themselves to the Lord a couple of years ago. We pray that they still have this call to the ministry. It is hoped that they will be able to enroll in the Singapore Bible College or Malaysia Bible Seminary.

As such, we need the funds to prepare them for the ministry. We are very grateful that the Woman's Missionary Society is taking up the challenge as a project to raise funds to meet this need.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each one of you for your continual support of our ministry here.

God bless each one of you and He will surely reward you all.

Sincerely in His Service,
Jenny Loi
Brethren Mission
2-B Ronggeng 2
Taman Skudai Baru
Skudai, Johor 81300
MALAYSIA

### Reading Circle Books (continued)

you 'What makes Christianity different from any other religion?', how could you answer? When you need reassurance that someone deeply loves you, where can you run?"

PRAYERS THAT ARE ANSWERED by Beverly Malz; $7.50.

Betty Malz shares prayer experiences—her own, her family's, and her friends—some spectacular, some not so spectacular. But each one unique, and with the same underlying theme, *there is power in prayer.*

## The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Recently our Share Group studied John 15, one section in which Jesus was preparing the disciples to continue His ministry. The verse "I am the vine, you are the branches" is familiar—it's part of the ten "I Am" verses in John. In the second portion, Jesus talked directly to the disciples, but it lays lots of responsibility on us, too, as Jesus' followers. We are the branches. We are to bear fruit.

We see the linkage of the vine, the branch, the fruit. So, what kind of fruit do we bear?

In my garden, when I plant onion sets, I expect onions; tiny beans will produce green beans; and corn—lots of it! However, I can't plant radishes and harvest rhubarb, nor lettuce and cut broccoli. This spring Dorman planted grapevines. We expect grapes (I wish for strawberries, too).

Neither can I sow bad habits/wild oats and expect to yield a good reputation. Nor will hate, prejudice, lying, envy, and strife produce the desired fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Because we are Christ's branches, we will be pruned. Dead branches are cut off and discarded; other branches may be cut back to encourage more growth. Pruning is God's way of holding us close, to be better nourished and strengthened for more and better service.

And there may be cute little furry bunnies eating the early growth, or Satan's wily attempts to discourage and destroy your efforts.

Since it is the responsibility of the branch to bear fruit, it has to be nourished. Proper soil and drainage are important. Our nourishment, as Christ's branches, comes from our feeding on God's Word and being saturated in prayer.

Weeds in my garden have to be dealt with. Sometimes weed killer is necessary. At least weeds have to be discarded or the roots can wiggle back into the soil or the dry seeds will blow and reproduce. Similarly, criticism, false accusations, and evil thoughts have to be destroyed; apologies, confession, and forgiveness will cleanse the sinful nature of our minds.

This summer, after weeding, pruning, and harvesting, enjoy the produce of your garden. And think on these things: whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. And the God of peace will be with you (Phil. 4:8, 10).

I hope this issue gives you some ideas for your society for next year. In return, share your efforts this year with others.

Look for some changes in the *Woman's Outlook Newsletter* this fall, but we'll still keep the yellow paper.

Your friend,

Joan

Joan

# Conference Highlights

The 107th General Conference of The Brethren Church
August 7–11 at Ashland University

## Opening Celebration and Moderator's Address

The opening celebration of General Conference will get off to a festive start at 6:30 on Monday evening, August 7, with a parade of banners. Local Brethren congregations are invited to bring a celebrative worship banner to Conference and to participate in the pageantry.*

The celebration will feature a message by the Conference moderator, Rev. Reilly Smith. Rev. Smith, who also will preside over Conference business sessions, became Executive Director of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church June 1, 1995. Prior to this, he served for ten years as pastor of The Brethren Church at Mulvane, Kans. A 1985 graduate (Master of Divinity degree) of Ashland Theological Seminary, Rev. Smith is married to the former Cynthia K. Hall. They have four children ranging in age from 21 to 10.



*Moderator Reilly Smith*

Also included in the service will be a welcome by Rev. Ronald W. Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries; greetings from the Brethren Youth In Christ by BYIC Steering Committee member Chad Geaslen; a music and mime presentation by a mime troop from the Northgate Community Brethren Church of Manteca, Calif.; and special music by Reveille, a singing group from the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church. Rev. Roger Stogsdill, pastor of the Northgate Church, will serve as worship leader for the celebration.

## Tuesday and Wednesday Evenings

Rev. William M. Easum, church growth consultant and former pastor, will speak at the evening services on Tuesday and Wednesday. He will also present a seminar Wednesday morning on "Equipping the Laity for Ministry." A picture and more information about Rev. Easum appeared in the June EVANGELIST.

*Congregations planning to participate in the parade of banners are asked to send a card—stating the approximate size of the banner and whether or not it will be mounted on a vertical staff—to Banners, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. Participants should bring their banners to the Display Room at 5:15 p.m. on Monday for instructions. It is hoped that banners can be displayed in the Conference hall throughout the week.

The Evangelism and Church Growth Commission will be leading the Tuesday evening service. In addition to the message by Rev. Easum, the service will include a skit highlighting the Andrews Center.

Ashland Theological Seminary will be in charge of the service Wednesday evening. The program will feature vocal music by the seminary choir and instrumental music by ATS Professor Ronald Sprunger and his wife Linda, whose talents are well-known to past Conference attenders. The seminary also plans to introduce two of its new students, K. Sudhir Kumar from India, son of Brethren missionaries K. Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar; and Eduardo Rodriguez, Jr., son of an Argentine Brethren pastor.

## W.M.S. and Soup Supper Speaker

Mrs. Jill Briscoe, well-known author and speaker, will present two messages on Wednesday of Conference week. Women will have an opportunity to hear Mrs. Briscoe during the Women's Luncheon at noon that day, and both men and women can hear her during the World Relief Soup Supper at 5:00 that afternoon. Author, speaker, editor, pastor's wife, mother to three children and grandmother to nine, she leads a very full and busy life. She also serves on the Board of Directors for World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals and has traveled to various parts of the world to see World Relief's work first-hand.



*Mrs. Jill Briscoe*

## Missions Night

Thursday evening will be missions night at Conference, with a Missionary Board Buffet at 5:00 (to be held in the new Family Life Center at Park Street Brethren Church), followed by a missions emphasis during the 7:00 evening service. Speaking at this service will be Brethren missionary Rev. David Kerner. Rev. Kerner and his wife Diane served for nine years as missionaries in Colombia, South America. They concluded their work in Bogotá, Colombia, in May, and Rev. Kerner has been



*Rev. David Kerner*

accepted in a doctoral program in missions at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

The service will also feature special music by Miguel and Sonia Antunez, Brethren missionaries in their homeland of Peru; prayers by Tracy and Todd Ruggles, Brethren missionaries to Mexico City; and greetings from other Brethren missionaries.

**The Conference will conclude with a session at 10:30 on Friday morning that will feature a report from the youth of the BYIC Convention. In recent years, this has proven to be one of the high points of Conference week. The session will conclude with a challenge by incoming moderator Dr. Richard Allison, launching the new Conference year.** [⇧]

# Conference Business

The General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) has no major business items to present for Conference action. Discussions on denominational reorganization are continuing, and a presentation on this subject will be made during one of the business sessions. No proposal has yet emerged on the baptism study authorized by the 1994 General Conference. A proposal will be coming from the western Brethren churches to hold General Conference near Estes Park, Colorado, in the year 2000. Elections will be held during the Tuesday afternoon business session.

## Nominees for General Conference Executive Council

The General Conference Nominating Committee, chaired by Rev. Glenn Grumbling, has prepared the following slate of nominees for the General Conference Executive Council. Delegates may make nominations from the floor. Persons so nominated must have given prior consent to serve if elected.

### Moderator-Elect

**G. Emery Hurd** is pastor of the Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church. He holds a bachelor's degree from Ashland University and both master of arts and master of divinity degrees from Ashland Theological Seminary. In his community he has served as president of the association of evangelicals, executive secretary of Cheyenne Citizens for Decency, chaplain of the county sheriff's department, and executive secretary of the Wyoming Billy Graham Crusade. Denominationally, he is a member of the Evangelism & Church Growth Commission and chaired the former Social Responsibilities Commission. He and his wife Susan have two children at home.

**John Shultz** is professor of pastoral counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary and chairs the Christian ministries department. He also operates a private counseling practice in Ashland. Shultz holds a bachelor's degree from Ashland University, a master of divinity degree from Ashland Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from Purdue University. He pastored the Tiosa, Ind., Brethren Church prior to joining the seminary faculty. He is a former member of GCEC and is the statutory agent for The Brethren Church, Inc. He and his wife Jeannie have two grown children.

### GCEC Member at Large (one to be elected)

**Mark Britton** currently serves as a GCEC member at large. He is pastor of the Derby, Kans., First Brethren Church. He is past moderator of the Midwest District and served on the former Church Relations Commission.

**Susie Black** is a member of the College Corner Brethren Church near Wabash, Ind. She has served on district and national committees.

**Mitchell Funkhouser** is pastor of the Warsaw, Ind., First Brethren Church and formerly served as national youth director for the Board of Christian Education of The Brethren Church.

**Ronald L. Waters** is pastor of the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church, Waterloo, Iowa. He has served as moderator of the Ohio, Indiana, and Central Districts. He is also a Passing On the Promise congregational advisor.

**Gerald Zook** is pastor of the Tiosa, Ind., Brethren Church and formerly served several other Brethren congregations. Before entering the pastorate, he was a mechanic and metal fabricator.

### GCEC East Region Representative (Florida and Southeastern Districts) (one to be elected)

**Gerald Barr** is pastor of the Hagerstown, Md., First Brethren Church. He is secretary-treasurer of the National Association of Brethren Church Elders and is a member of the Southeastern District Mission Board.

**Richard Craver** is pastor of the Maurertown, Va., Brethren Church. He is assistant secretary-treasurer of the National Association of Brethren Church Elders and is a member of the Southeastern District Board of Spiritual Overseers.

**Tina Ross** is a member of the Bloomingdale Brethren Church, Valrico, Fla. A registered nurse, she chairs her local church's worship ministry and is a Passing On the Promise (POtP) congregational advisor.

### GCEC Mideast Region Representative (Ohio and Pennsylvania Districts) (one to be elected)

**Brenda B. Colijn** is completing her first term as the Mideast Regional Representative. A member of and deacon in the Smoky Row Brethren Church, Worthington, Ohio, she chair's GCEC's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication. She is an adjunct instructor at Ashland Theological Seminary.

**Bill Hesketh** is a member, deacon, and teacher in the Pleasant View Brethren Church, Vandergrift, Pa. Before retiring, he worked for Alcoa Corporation. He has been a Pennsylvania District youth advisor and was a member of the former national Board of Christian Education.

**Curt Nies** is pastor of the Masontown, Pa., Brethren Church. He currently serves on the Pennsylvania District Mission Board and leads the Pennsylvania District Elders organization.

**Jim Rowsey** is pastor of the Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church. He is a past moderator of the Ohio Conference and formerly served on the national Board of Christian Education and on the Brethren Publishing Company Board.

## Nominees for Brethren Church Ministries Commissions

The General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) has selected the following persons for nomination to serve on Brethren Church Ministries commissions for 1995–96.

### Spiritual Formation Commission

**Brian Moore** has been renominated to chair this commission. He has been pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church since 1983. He has served on this commission since its formation in 1992. He completed his Doctor of Ministry degree at Ashland Theological Seminary in May.

**Nominated for the four member positions are:**

**Fred Brandon**, pastor of the North Georgetown, Ohio, First Brethren Church, has completed one year on this commission.

**Carolyn Cooksey**, librarian at Ashland University and a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, has been a member of this commission since 1992. *(continued on next page)*

**Jerry Flora** is a professor at Ashland Theological Seminary, where he teaches courses in spiritual formation. He has been a member of the commission since 1992 and is a member of Park Street Brethren Church.

**Marlin McCann**, pastor of North Manchester, Ind., First Brethren Church, has served four times as spiritual director for Brethren Way of Christ weekends.

**Susan Mercer** is a homemaker, substitute teacher, and member of the Gretna (Bellefontaine, Ohio) Brethren Church, where she has been involved in the prayer chain, prayer groups, and Moms in Touch—mothers who meet weekly to pray for their children and their schools.

### Evangelism & Church Growth Commission

**Cindy Smith** is being renominated to chair this commission and has served on the commission since 1993. Before relocating to Ashland this spring, she was an occupational therapist at St. Joseph Medical Center in Wichita, Kans., and was actively involved with Passing On the Promise (POtP) at the Mulvane Church.

**Nominated for the four member positions are:**

**Cheryl Ennis**, a POtP congregational co-coordinator for the Ardmore First Brethren Church, South Bend, Ind., and a congregational advisor for another POtP congregation, has been a member and secretary of the commission since 1994. She is a legal secretary by profession.

**G. Emery Hurd** is pastor of the Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church and has been a member of this commission since 1994. He also was state executive secretary for the Wyoming Billy Graham Crusade.

**Pat Gravatt** is a POtP congregational co-coordinator for the Mt. Olive Brethren Church, McGaheysville, Va. She is a business consultant and a former bank vice president.

**Ronald E. Miller, Sr.**, a POtP congregational co-coordinator and assistant pastor for Linwood, Md., Brethren Church, will become a student at Ashland Theological Seminary this fall. He has served on numerous outreach committees in the church.

**Tina Ross** is a member and POtP congregational advisor at the Bloomingdale Brethren Church, Valrico, Fla. A registered nurse, she moved to Florida from Berlin, Pa., as a home missions tentmaker.

**Cheryl Schmiedt**, a POtP congregational co-coordinator at Northgate Community Brethren Church, Manteca, Calif., works with her husband managing an almond farm. She has also been active as district secretary and in local church music, worship, and children's ministries.

### Leadership Development Commission

**Mary Ellen Drushal** is renominated to chair this commission. She is academic dean and teaches Christian education and church administration at Ashland Theological Seminary. She previously chaired the Spiritual Formation Commission and has chaired this commission since 1994.

**Nominated for the four member positions are:**

**Daryl A. Freeman** is moderator of the Southeast Christian Fellowship, the Brethren church in Washington, D.C. Professionally, he is a budget analyst for the Department of Employment Services of the District of Columbia.

**Keith Hensley**, pastor of the Pleasant View Brethren Church, Vandergrift, Pa., is a member of The Brethren Church POtP field staff. He has led his church in calling several persons into ministry.

**Ken Hunn**, pastor of the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church, has previously served on GCEC and was a member of the former Board of Christian Education.

**Ann McNerney**, member of the Winding Waters Brethren Church, Elkhart, Ind., has served on the church's board of directors and chaired the personnel ministry. She is president of McNerney & Associates, Inc., an executive search firm.

**David L. West**, pastor of Northwest Brethren Chapel, Tucson, Ariz., is a member of GCEC and a former member of the Evangelism & Church Growth Commission. He also helped organize the Great Western Brethren Roundup.

Conference delegates may nominate from the floor persons for these positions. Persons so nominated should have given prior consent to serve if elected and have indicated their ability to attend the two scheduled commission meetings on October 6–7, 1995, and March 15–16, 1996, in Ashland, Ohio.

**Conference attenders arriving in Ashland early are invited to attend a special service Sunday evening, August 6, at 6:00 at the Ashland Garber Brethren Church featuring an African-American men's choir from the Saint Paul United Methodist Church in Ashland.**

## In Memory

**Betty Marker**, 50, June 7. Member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Arden Gilmer.

**Mrytle Mulhorn**, 84, June 6. Member for 20 years of the Pleasant View Brethren Church, where she served as W.M.S. secretary. Memorial service by Pastor R. Keith Hensley.

**Theodore (Ted) R. Sarver**, 82, June 5. Faithful member for many years of the Berlin Brethren Church, where he served as deacon, trustee, and usher. He was the father of former Brethren missionary Kay (Kitty) Winfield. Services by Pastor Bryan Karchner and Rev. Ralph Landis.

**Edna M. Carson**, 93, May 30. Member for more than 80 years of the Corinth Brethren Church, where she served as a Sunday school teacher for more than 60 years, as W.M.S. president, and custodian for 25 years or more. Services by Pastor Rod Schuler.

**Mary Conner**, 86, May 22. Member of the Maurertown Brethren Church and W.M.S. Services by Pastor Richard Craver.

**Margaret Emswiller**, 82, May 17. Member for 43 years of the Maurertown Brethren Church, where she served as deaconess, treasurer, financial secretary, and W.M.S. member. Services by Pastor Richard Craver and Rev. Doc Shank.

**Barbara Purvis**, 49, May 13. Member of the Maurertown Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Richard Craver.

**June Brown**, 62. May 10. Member for 42 years and deaconess at the Ardmore First Brethren Church, where she served for many years as a Sunday school teacher and director for V.B.S. She also served on the Indiana District Board of Christian Education. Services by Pastor William Shipman.

**Robert Cook**, 60, May 2. Member of the Corinth Brethren Church. Services by Pastor Rod Schuler.

**Orville Vandermark**, 81, April 29. Member of the North Manchester First Brethren Church, where he served as trustee, Sunday school teacher and superintendent, chorister, and choir member. Services by Pastors Marlin McCann and Woodrow Immel.

**Bertha Shireman**, 87, April 17. Active member of the North Manchester First Brethren Church and Builders Class.

**Innes Frey**, 95, April 13. Member and deaconess of the North Manchester First Brethren Church, W.M.S., and Volunteer Class. Services by Pastor Marlin McCann.

**Nicole Horner**, 21, April 13. Member of the Fairless Hills-Levittown Church. Services by Christopher Diehl, youth pastor, assisted by Pastor C. William Cole. (Nicole was killed in an automobile accident; eight of her organs were donated to others. This was Youth Pastor Diehl's first funeral. He was to have officiated at Nicole's wedding in May.)

**Gladys Grindle**, 81, April 4. Member of the North Manchester First Brethren Church and of the Builders Class; served as church cook for dinners. Services by Pastor Marlin McCann.

## Goldenaires

**Larry and Martha Loveless**, 50th, August 24. Members of the Lousiville First Brethren Church.

## Membership Growth

**Goshen:** 3 by transfer

**Corinth:** 2 by baptism

**Garber:** 12 by baptism

**Bethlehem:** 4 by baptism

**Bryan:** 8 by baptism, 1 by transfer, 3 by testimony

**Park Street:** 24 by baptism, 15 by transfer

*Note: The report of weddings is on page 19.*

# Brethren From Western U.S. Assemble For Great Western Brethren Roundup

**Reported by Ronald W. Waters**




**Estes Park, Colo.** — A first-of-its-kind event was held June 23–25 when representatives from the isolated Brethren churches in the western United States gathered near Estes Park, Colorado, for the Great Western Brethren Roundup.

The purpose of the event was for Brethren people from far-flung parts of the western U.S. to share common concerns, identify ways to support one another in ministry, get acquainted with other Brethren from the region, and worship the Lord in the beauty of his creation. Attendance for the Roundup was 120 and included singles, couples, and families, with ages ranging from infants to senior saints.

The Roundup was held at Long's Peak Conference Center near Rocky Mountain National Park. The grandeur of the mountains provided a fitting backdrop for recognizing God's sovereignty and majesty.

Members of seven of the nine Brethren churches in the Midwest, Southwest, and Northern California districts were joined by denominational leaders and other persons interested in participating in the unique event.

During the closing worship celebration, Rev. David West, one of the Roundup coordinators and pastor of Northwest Brethren Chapel in Tucson, Ariz., summed up the gathering as follows: "This event is historic not just because it hasn't happened before. It has significance because we've come to know people we haven't known before. . . . It also has significance because of what God has done and will do in the future as a result of this meeting."

Pastors of churches in the western region held retreats in January 1994 and 1995 to develop closer relationships and identify a common direction. The Great Western Brethren Roundup was one result of those gatherings.

A second result was a vision statement: "to develop cooperative ministry among western Brethren for the expansion of the Kingdom of God." Objectives necessary to fulfill that vision include church planting, leadership development, cooperation, and communication. Under church planting, the leaders set a goal of starting eleven new churches in the West by the year 2000.



*Times of worship celebration were an important part of this first-of-its-kind gathering of western Brethren.* **Photo by Ron Waters.**



*During one of the small-group sessions, this group chose to meet outside in the cool mountain air.* **Photo by Norman Tucker.**

Worship celebrations on Friday evening and Sunday morning were led by a praise and worship team of persons from the Tucson First, Northwest Chapel, and Northgate Community congregations. On Friday evening, Rev. Bill Brady, pastor at Tucson First Church, related a story about alligator wrestling to David's encounter with Goliath. He identified two giants faced by western Brethren: the distance separating the congregations and that the western part of the United States is one of the most difficult areas in which to evangelize. He challenged Roundup participants to rally around a common vision for planting new churches and reaching the lost.

During Saturday morning devotions, Rev. Randy Best, pastor at Stockton, California, used Jeremiah 33:3 as a challenge to seek God's leading. "God has

*(continued on next page)*

# Ashland Seminary Honors Dr. Richard Allison With Distinguished Christian Service Award

**Ashland, Ohio** — Dr. Richard Allison, professor of Christian education at Ashland Theological Seminary, was presented the Distinguished Christian Service Award by the seminary at its commencement ceremony on May 27.

Dr. Allison also delivered the address at the commencement ceremony. He gave the graduates three keys for successfully navigating the road of life: forget the past, stretch forward to the future, and keep your eyes on the prize. He left the graduates with a challenge to "Embrace the will of God, obey the call of God, receive the power of God, and reflect the peace of God."

Dr. Allison was presented the Distinguished Christian Service Award prior to his address, and at that time he was also honored as the seminary's Outstanding Alumnus for 1995. Dr. Allison (65), who will be moving into semi-retirement this year, was recognized for his 21 years of service at the seminary. At the seminary he has been a leader in the field of Christian education, and he also provided strong leadership for the Doctor of Ministry program, for which he served as director from 1980 to 1994.



*Dr. Richard Allison*

A 1961 graduate of the seminary, Dr. Allison served as a Brethren pastor before joining the ATS faculty in 1974. He pastored successively the Wayne Heights (Waynesboro, Pa.), Goshen (Ind.) First, and Jefferson (Goshen, Ind.) Brethren Churches. During his 34 years of full-time Christian service, he has been an active leader in The Brethren Church, serving on various district and denominational boards and committees. He was General Conference moderator in 1969 and is the current moderator-elect.

Dr. Allison is married to the former Emily Anne Heide, and they have four grown sons, David, Raymond, James, and John. John is currently a student at Ashland Theological Seminary.

## Great Western Roundup

*(continued from previous page)*

called us to the mountain to hear from Him," he said. He announced the formation of a new congregation—Hope Brethren Fellowship—that will begin meeting Sunday evening, July 9, in the Stockton building. The congregation will be the first Brethren congregation ministering primarily to Filipino Americans. Best also expressed a desire to see more Calebs (senior saints) and Deborahs (women) accepting challenging visions and taking leadership in the church.

Emery Hurd presented a proposal to hold General Conference in the year 2000 in Estes Park. He cited the need for The Brethren Church to expand its vision and its geographical boundaries and said that holding Conference in the West would send a clear signal of the church's resolve for Brethren involvement in extending God's kingdom throughout the nation. The proposal received overwhelming support from Roundup participants.

The remainder of Saturday morning was devoted to small-group discussions coordinated by Tom Saunders. Groups were formed to include persons from various churches. One group was formed among youth attending the Roundup and another included pastors and spouses. Among other things, groups were asked to identify three directions they see God leading Brethren in the West and the three most pressing issues facing the churches. Each group reported its findings to the gathered body.

An afternoon of free time for sightseeing was followed by a barbecue. Though rain forced the event inside, participants used it as an opportunity to become better acquainted with one another. The barbecue featured live entertainment by a country western trio, icebreaker activities led by Emery Hurd, and a campfire featuring Pastor Mark Britton of the Derby, Kans., Church. Britton invited participants to continually ask the question "Why not?" when faced with challenging opportunities.



*A tub of money ($1,522) was given for a future joint ministry in the western region.*

After a group photo session on Sunday morning, Dr. Fred Finks of Ashland Theological Seminary led a Bible study focusing on God in scripture as a searching God. He used the four objectives of the pastoral leaders as an outline for looking at the Apostle Paul's ministry in the Book of the Acts. He called attention to the unity of purpose and vision that was developing among both pastors and lay members of the western Brethren churches, a unity that was being further developed by the Roundup.

As part of the closing worship service, Rev. David West used the life of Moses as an example for a visionary people. From Exodus 3—4 and 13, he noted that God used Moses' staff and outstretched arm, first, as a testimony to Moses of God's call to leadership; and, second, to the Israelites. West noted a significant transition in Exodus 17:9—that Moses identified it as "the staff of God in my hand." This demonstrated Moses' recognition of God's leading role. West also called for a move beyond token prayer to investing time in extended, corporate prayer for God to accomplish His will.

West concluded by calling for a vision for "reaching people who will die needlessly in their sins" without hearing the saving good news. From the account in 1 Samuel 17, he noted that David "ran quickly toward the battle lines to meet Goliath. He saw no fear in the man standing before him and took the first shot. . . . We need to run toward the vision and not away from it," he said.

Through the experiences of the weekend gathering, it became evident that the participants had embraced the vision of their pastors. Participants were enthusiastic about opportunities for outreach and church planting before them. They demonstrated that resolve by giving an offering of $1,522 for some joint ministry yet to be identified. Also, a consensus developed for formation of a joint task force among the districts to give direction to the objectives identified by the pastors, particularly related to church planting.

Dr. Dale Stoffer, professor at Ashland Theological Seminary, who attended the Roundup, commented, "The western Brethren have put aside their smallness as an excuse and are now using it as a means of motivation."

Brethren from the eastern part of the United States would do well to embrace a similar resolve for expanded outreach and church planting ministries.

# Being Sent to Siberia Has New Meaning For Brethren Missionary Janet Solomon

*The following article about Janet Solomon, written by Bonnie Bilotto Kleinman, appeared in the June 7 edition of the* ***Dayton*** *(Ohio)* ***Daily News*** *and is reprinted here with the permission of that newspaper. Mrs. Solomon is a former Brethren missionary to Argentina and Colombia, South America.*

DAYTON Christian Schools teacher Janet Solomon reached across 14 time zones to share her passion for Christian ethics with Russian school administrators who are attempting to set up a Christian curriculum in their country.

The Beavercreek woman set off for Siberia as part of the CoMission, a group of more than 80 religious organizations invited by Russian officials to help the former Soviet Union rebuild its moral structure.

After 70 years of atheism, the Russian Ministry of Education believes there is a moral and spiritual crisis among the Russian people, Solomon said.

Solomon said she was moved by the educators' pleas. She was also encouraged by her husband, Tim, and children, Lisa, 10, and Stephen, 7, to make the 19-day trip to Russia.

"I believe in what she's doing," said Tim Solomon, who manages the Bethel Bookstore in Beavercreek. "It was actually good for our family. The children took an interest in a dot on the map on the other side of the world, and I improved my laundry skills."

Solomon values moral education for her own children and for her students at the Xenia campus of Dayton Christian Schools, where she teaches Spanish.

Those values are the same ones she tried to impart to the educators in Russia.

"We present the idea that if students are taught that there are some absolutes, some things that are inherently right and wrong, they will behave differently than they will if they believe that truth is relative—[that] we all come from apes anyway, so we might as well party and do whatever we want," Solomon said.

"Your world view affects how you act, and society is helped when education is taught from a moral perspective."

Solomon said the Russians are finding out their 70-year experiment didn't work.

"In fact, after giving atheism a try for 70 years, many educators told me it is impossible to teach without a moral base," she said. "It flat out doesn't work. It can't be done."

Solomon said she would like to see more moral-based materials taught in American public schools.

"I believe if we were to introduce these materials into our own public school curriculum, as some pilot schools are doing on a voluntary basis, we would see a definite increase in student achievement and interest, and student violence and apathy would go down," she said.

"Today's students are looking for something to believe in, for hope, for truth. Why would we want to try what didn't work in Russia?"

Solomon said The CoMission has now trained 30,000 educators in 92 former Soviet cities. But she said there is still a need for volunteers from all walks of life.

"It will be sad if the door to the former Soviet Union once again closes," she said. "But it is tragic that, with the door wide open, we can't get people to (the educators) fast enough because so many cities are begging for us to come."



*Janet Solomon (standing in center, wearing glasses) with some of the Russian educators who attended the training sessions in Siberia on Christian ethics. The woman seated third from the left was her interpreter.*

She said there are more than 120,000 schools with 43 million children eager to know about western Christianity.

"The CoMission has a goal of sending 12,000 people to the former U.S.S.R. by the end of 1997," she said. "There are opportunities for three-week teacher convocations, as well as one-year assignments, and you don't have to be a certified teacher to do either one."

Solomon said there is a need for a certain number of trained teachers, but noted "we had a songwriter and a Christian from Radio City Music Hall on our team."

She said the people she met were quite receptive to the idea of universal human values. Some educators told her there were no atheists in Russia.

Solomon kept a journal of her trip, which she hopes to turn into a book. It will include poetry she wrote for the trip's final program.

"It is amazing what God will do in your life if you let it happen," she said.

**If you would like more information, call Janet Solomon at 513-427-8587. Or call The CoMission direct at 800-670-7742.*

## Rev. Russell Gordon Resigns Position with Mission Board

**Ashland, Ohio** — Rev. Russell Gordon has submitted his resignation as Director of U.S. Ministries and Church Growth with the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church, effective October 1 of this year, to accept a call to pastor The Brethren Church at New Lebanon, Ohio.



Rev. Gordon has served with the Missionary Board since July 1, 1989. Prior to that he pastored Brethren churches in Bradenton, Fla.; Fort Scott, Kans.; and Williamstown, Ohio.

# Little Crusader

**Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).**

## Hi boys and girls!

I hope you are having fun this summer. It's a lot of fun to get together with your friends and swim or play ball or ride bikes. When you do these things, do you ever meet people whom you don't know? Maybe you meet people at the park or when you are on vacation.

Always remember to be a good witness for Jesus around these people. What is a witness? That's when your actions (the things you do) and your words (the things you say) show others that Jesus is your Savior. When you have the love of Jesus in your heart, you will always share your toys. Or you will forgive anyone who does something bad to you.

Try to remember, no matter where you are, to be a great witness for Jesus! He's counting on you to tell others about Him.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus heals a sick man. Then Jesus tells the man to go home to his family and tell them how much the Lord has done for him. Do you have anyone in your family who doesn't know Jesus? How can you be a witness to this person?

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What can you do to show the love of Jesus the next time a friend comes to play?

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# James R. Black Retires From Missionary Board; Takes Up Challenge of New, Part-Time Position

**Ashland, Ohio** — Rev. James R. Black retired May 31 as Executive Director of the Missionary Board, following nearly 10½ years of dedicated service to The Brethren Church in this position.

Rev. Black came to the Missionary Board Office in Ashland in August 1981 as Director of Home Missions and Evangelism. Prior to this he had spent nearly 25 years in pastoral ministry, during which he served Brethren congregations in Akron, Ohio (Firestone Park); Waterloo, Iowa; Milledgeville, Ill.; and Dayton, Ohio (Hillcrest).

After serving for nearly 3½ years in the area of Home Missions and Evangelism, he became Executive Director of the Missionary Board in January 1985. Under his leadership Brethren missions extended into Paraguay and Peru, as well as expanding in both the home and world arenas.



*Rev. Jim Black in his new office.*

Though retiring from this position, Rev. Black (66) is not yet ready for a rocking chair. He has taken on a new challenge, that of Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving for The Brethren Church. In this part-time position, he will seek to assist Brethren congregations and individuals in the development (or improvement) of biblical stewardship practices, including (but not limited to) estate planning and planned giving.

He is available to speak and to lead seminars on biblical stewardship in local churches and at district conferences and other gatherings of Brethren. He may be contacted through the National Office in Ashland, where he continues to have an office.

Since his new position is part time, Rev. Black also hopes to pursue on a limited basis one of his first loves—evangelism. He will be available for a limited number of special (revival, evangelistic, renewal) services each year.

The new Executive Director of the Missionary Board is Rev. Reilly Smith, who is also serving as this year's General Conference moderator. (*See page 11 for information about Rev. Smith.*)

## Dr. Leroy Solomon to Become Dir. of Development at ATS

**Ashland, Ohio** — Dr. Leroy Solomon has accepted a position as Director of Development for Ashland Theological Seminary, effective October 1, according to an announcement by ATS president Dr. Fred Finks.



*Dr. Leroy Solomon*

As Director of Development, he will work with churches, alumni and other individuals, and the Seminary Foundation in fund-raising. In addition, he will probably do some teaching at the seminary in the areas of preaching and leadership.

Solomon holds two degrees from ATS, the Master of Divinity (1978) and the Doctor of Ministry (1992). He is also a 1972 graduate of Ashland University.

He has served as a pastor since 1975, serving the Ashland Park Street (as associate), Gretna, Smithville, and Winding Waters Brethren Churches. Since August 1994 he has pastored the Homer Baptist Church in Homer, N.Y.

He is married, and he and his wife Jane have a foster son, Jonathan (9).

In commenting on Solomon's appointment, Dr. Finks said, "I think Lee will be an outstanding addition to the administrative team of ATS and that he will be instrumental in laying a solid financial foundation for the future growth and ministry of the seminary."

## Rev. Gerald Zook Makes Good On a Promise to Tiosa Church

**Rochester, Ind.** — Rev. Gerald Zook, who became pastor of the Tiosa Brethren Church at the start of this year, had to make good recently on a promise he made to the congregation.

During the winter months, attendance at the Tiosa Church averaged 45. As part of the Passing On the Promise emphasis, Pastor Zook challenged the congregation to work for an attendance of 80 on Easter Sunday. He promised that if this goal was reached, he would ride an exercise bike the next Sunday while preaching his sermon. He went a step further with the youth, promising them that if a total of 100 attended, they could give him a haircut.

Praise the Lord, attendance on Easter was 95! True to his word, Pastor Zook rode an exercise bike during his sermon the next Sunday. And being a good sport, he even let the youth cut his hair. It seems they could use a bit more practice. They used pinking shears and knives. Next time they'll try clippers! Meanwhile, the Tiosa Brethren are trying to sharpen their evangelistic skills.

*— reported by Dorcas Van Duyne*





*Pastor Gerald Zook getting a haircut (above) and preaching from an exercise bike (r.).*

# Brethren Challenged To "Catch the Vision" At the Indiana District Conference June 2–3

**Shipshewana, Ind.** — "Catch the Vision" was the theme of the Indiana District Conference held June 2–3 at the Brethren Retreat Center.

Following afternoon auxiliary meetings, the conference opened Friday evening with worship; a commissioning service for Rick Miller, new director of the Retreat Center; and a message by Moderator Duane Dickson. The worship was led by Crossover and by Praise on Stage, music and drama teams from Winding Waters Brethren Church of Elkhart, Ind.

In his message, Moderator Dickson shared his vision for the district—a vision of churches involved in leading people to saving faith in Jesus Christ and discipling those new believers. Rather than make recommendations, he offered four suggestions: (1) that all churches "be involved in a direct, no excuse, growth program"; (2) that attitudes be nurtured in churches to promote growth; (3) that Brethren "aggressively pursue the lost, confronting them with God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ"; and (4) that church members "support the church financially," with the tithe being the minimum standard for giving.

The evening program concluded with a vision presentation by the Indiana Missions Ministry that included a showing of the recently-completed video, "Winning the Race at Indy," about Brethren church-planting in the Indianapolis area.

Saturday was used for the business portion of the Conference. During the morning session the moderator's suggestions were considered and reports received from denominational representatives and the various district officers and ministries. Rev. Woodrow Immel, statistician, reported that for the first time in many years, membership and Sunday school attendance increased in the district. Following these reports, elections were held. Elected were Gene Eckerley, moderator-elect; John Long, treasurer; and Woodrow Immel, statistician. Other officers are moderator—Tim Garner; past moderator—Duane Dickson; and secretary—Ron Burns.

In the afternoon session, the board and staff of the Brethren Retreat Center gave a statement of its vision to relocate in order to have a facility more suitable for summer camp and for families. The board has made an offer on a farm near Akron, Ind. Once a site is purchased, the board will develop a camping facility at the new location. In the meantime, the present facility will be maintained.

Three persons were honored with plaques during the conference. Keith Bennett and Jim Thomas, past presidents of the district mission board, were honored by that board for their leadership. Steve Williams of the Roanoke congregation was recognized by the conference for his legal work performed on behalf of the district at no charge.

The conference concluded with a challenge from new moderator Rev. Tim Garner. He introduced the 1995–96 theme, "We Can Do MORE," based on Ephesians 3:14–21. He developed the theme on the acrostic M.O.R.E.—Managing Our Resources Efficiently/Effectively.

Next year's conference will be held May 3–4 at the Retreat Center.

*— reported by Ron Burns, secretary, and Ronald W. Waters*

## Sixteen Brethren Students Receive Degrees from ATS

**Ashland, Ohio** — Sixteen Brethren students were among the 154 graduates (the largest graduating class ever) who received degrees on Saturday, May 27, from Ashland Theological Seminary.

Among the Brethren graduates was the entire pastoral staff of the Saint James, Md., Brethren Church. *Dr. Brian Moore*, senior pastor of the congregation, received the Doctor of Ministry degree. *Darryl Shanholtz*, who serves as assistant to the pastor, received a Diploma in Theological Studies. And *Kristal Bowers*, director of Christian education at St. James, was awarded a Certificate in Christian Ministries.

Other Brethren receiving degrees were:

*Sharon Bowling*, M. Div. (with honors); member of the Oak Hill, W. Va., First Brethren Church; employed as Coordinator of Student Advising at Ashland University.

*Elaine Alice Heath*, M.Div. (with high honors); member of the University Church; pastoring in the United Methodist Church.

*Dr. Donald Kelley*, M. Div. (with honors); member of the Newark, Ohio, Brethren Church, where he works with the youth; a resident in pathology at the Ohio State University School of Medicine.

*L. Eugene Oburn*, M. Div.; member of the Pleasant Hill, Ohio, First Brethren Church; pastors the Williamstown, Ohio, First Brethren Church.

*Stacy Oligee*, M.A. in Pastoral Counseling (with honors); member of the West Alexandria, Ohio, First Brethren Church; works for a counseling agency in Medina, Ohio, and serves as a tentmaker with The Brethren Church of Medina.

*Richard Rader*, M.A.; member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church and active in the University Church; has begun a personal music ministry called "Vision Ministries."

*Rev. Thomas Schiefer*, M. Div.; pastor of the Smoky Row Brethren Church, Worthington, Ohio.

*Thomas Smith*, M. Div.; former pastor of the Denver, Ind., Brethren Church; joined Park Street Brethren Church while attending seminary; becomes pastor of the Muncie, Ind., First Brethren Church this month (July).

*Thomas Sprowls, Jr.*, M. Div. (with high honors); member of the Berlin, Pa., Brethren Church; pastors the new Brethren Church of Medina, Ohio.

*Kurt Stout*, M. Div.; member of the Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church; now associate pastor of the North Manchester First Brethren Church.

*Mark Teal*, M. Div.; member of the Oakville, Ind., First Brethren Church; currently pastors a congregation in the Church of the Brethren.

*Gerry Weiss*, M.A. in Church Administration (with honors); member of Park Street Brethren Church; seeking ministry opportunities.

*Maggie Vent*, M.A. in Pastoral Counseling (with honors); member of University Church and attends Park Street Church; a counselor with Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates in Ashland.

### Weddings

**Steffany Jacquelyn Dunlap to Soul Rowen**, June 24 at the bride's home in New Lebanon; Pastor Tony Price officiating. Bride a member of The Brethren Church of New Lebanon.

**Marty Evans to Mark Deeter**, June 17 at the Pleasant Hill First Brethren Church; pastor Robert Westfall officiating. Groom a member of the Pleasant Hill First Brethren Church.

**Ann Guligg to Douglas Easter**, June 17 in Oshkosh, Wis. Groom a member of the Corinth Brethren Church.

**Leigh Ann Logel to Christopher Allen Powell**, June 17 at The Brethren Church in New Lebanon; Pastors Tony Pride and Charles Munson officiating. Bride a member of The Brethren Church in New Lebanon.

**Julie Brown to Warren Casella**, May 20 at the Pleasant View Brethren Church; Pastor R. Keith Hensley officiating. Attend the Pleasant View Brethren Church.

**Susan Rupp to Randy Fello**, May 6 at the Pleasant View Brethren Church; Pastor R. Keith Hensley and Rev Richard Leksell officiating. Attend the Pleasant View Brethren Church.

# 107th General Conference

**August 7–11**

**Ashland, Ohio**

## Theme: "The Devoted Church . . . Grows"

**Theme Verses: Acts 2:42–47**

The Book of the Acts describes the commitments of the early church—to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. These commitments of God's people led to a growing, expanding church in Jerusalem, in the surrounding areas of Judea and Samaria, and throughout the known world of that day.

As we master these same commitments, The Brethren Church will experience similar growth—in the maturity of "already Christians" and in the lives of new followers of Jesus Christ.



*William M. Easum*

### *The 1995 Conference will feature:*

- William Easum as our outside speaker and leader of a Wednesday workshop entitled "Equipping the Laity for Ministry"
- Jill Briscoe as speaker for the Women's Luncheon and World Relief Soup Supper
- Messages by Moderator Reilly Smith and Moderator-Elect Richard Allison
- Rich times of worship and fellowship
- A celebration of Brethren missions
- Updates on denominational ministries
- Exciting business sessions

*Don't miss this year's General Conference! Make plans now to attend, and complete the registration form on page 13 of the June* EVANGELIST *no later than* ***July 21.***

***See you in August!***

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The Brethren
# Evangelist

Vol. 117, No. 8 | A newsletter for Brethren people | September 1995

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## Do you notice something different?

If you have been a regular reader of the THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, you will surely notice a number of changes with this issue—in the size and appearance of the publication as well as in the fact that articles begin on the front page. These are all part of the change in the EVANGELIST from a magazine to a newsletter.

If you have *not* been an EVANGELIST subscriber, the main difference you have probably noticed about this issue is that you received it. This, too, is part of the transformation of the publication—from a subscription-based magazine to a newsletter that will be sent without subscription fee to every Brethren home.

### Why the changes?

These changes reflect a commitment to using the EVANGELIST as a means of communicating a unified vision in The Brethren Church. In the 90's a newsletter seems better fitted to this purpose than a magazine. And by sending it to every Brethren home, we are better able to communicate this vision to every member of the church.

Articles in the newsletter will seek to tell who we are, where we're headed, and how we are attempting to get there. It will focus particularly on how we can achieve the priorities we have set for ourselves as a denomination.

Much of this issue is a report of the 1995 General Conference, held August 7–11. What better place for this first issue of the newsletter to begin? For it is at General Conference that we re-evaluate who we are, sharpen our vision, and recommit ourselves to achieving our goals and priorities.

Change is inevitable. The EVANGELIST is changing to better serve the needs of The Brethren Church.

1995 Moderator's Address*

## Moderator Reilly Smith calls upon Brethren to "let your devotion grow"

I ASK only one thing of you this week, and that is that your devotion grow. "The *Devoted* Church . . . Grows." It's not the church that sits in the pew; not the church that thinks that spiritual gifts include the gift of pew-sitting. It's the *devoted* church that grows, the one that's sold out to God.



*Moderator Reilly Smith*

That word *devoted* is an Old Testament word. When Luke chose to write that word to record our Lord's history in the Book of Acts, chapter 2, he chose it specifically because devoted means "given to God in such a way that no one else can use it."

Often times in the Old Testament, things that were devoted were destroyed—like the city of Jericho. The Israelites were to devote that city to God, to kill every living thing and burn everything that would burn. That city was given to God in such a way that it was useless for anybody but Him.

In the New Testament a woman took an alabaster jar filled with very fine ointment and broke it over the head of Jesus. Once she did that, the jar could be used for nothing else. And the ointment that had been in that jar could not be recovered. It was totally given over to Jesus and could not be used by anybody else.

Brothers and sisters, devoted churches are made up of devoted Christians. We must give ourselves to God in such a way that we are useless for anybody but Him. It's only when we are so heavenly-minded that people think we are of no earthly good—it's only when we get *that* heavenly-minded that we *are* of any earthly good. We must give ourselves as living sacrifices to God. Sacrifices are totally consumed. They are used up by God. And devoted churches—churches that grow every day—are made up of devoted Christians.

In Mark 8:34–36 our Lord tells us how to devote ourselves to Him. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and *(next page)*

*This is an abbreviated version of the Moderator's Address. The entire message will be printed in the General Conference Annual. It is also available on audio cassette for $4.00 (plus $2.00 for postage and handling) from the National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

### In this issue

General Conference review . . 1
Understanding the Bible . . . 7
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News of the Brethren . . . . . 10

***The Women's Outlook Newsletter* is in the center of this issue.**

Moderator's Address continued

take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life [that's common sense] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the Good News will save it [that's God's sense]."

Jesus told us that a man becomes devoted when he denies himself. This is the "me generation"—a generation that says, "Grab all the gusto you can get"; "Look out for number one"; "If it feels good, do it."

## We must deny ourselves

But Jesus said that if you would be a devoted Christian and part of the devoted church, then you must deny yourself. He didn't say deny yourself ice cream or peppermint candy or the finer things of life. He said, "**Deny yourself**"! That means give up your very being—all of your prerogatives, all of your options, all of your plans, all of your hopes and dreams. Give them up to Him.

When you do that, God will replace them with the most fulfilling things He has to offer—*His* dreams for you; *His* dreams to bless you beyond your wildest imagination; *His* plans; *His* goals. He's promised them to you when you deny number one, when you give up number one for Number One who sits on the throne.

In Philippians chapter 2, Jesus showed us how to do that. It says there of Him that though He was equal with God in every way and had the very nature of God, He emptied himself of all His prerogatives, of all His options, of all His plans, of all His desires. And He humbled Himself and became a man. He became obedient and took upon Himself the form of a servant.

In the verses immediately preceding that, the Apostle Paul told the believers that their attitude should be just like that. They should honor one another above each other and should look out not only for their own interests, but for the interest of others.

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*The opening celebration of General Conference (during which the moderator gave his message) was not your typical Brethren (or Conference) worship service! It began with a "spiritual pep rally" that included a parade of banners, choreographed worship by three women from the Northgate Mime Troupe, and exuberant singing led by the praise band from Park Street Church.*

Step number one in becoming a devoted church is becoming a devoted Christian. And step number one in becoming a devoted Christian is to deny yourself. ***Deny your very self.***

## We must take up our cross

The second thing Jesus told us is that we have to take up our cross. The cross isn't a piece of jewelry to wear or an even an object to display in front of our church. A cross is the instrument death—of horrible, humiliating, public, excruciating, slow, painful, hurtful death.

Jesus said that if we would be devoted Christians who give ourselves up in such a way that we're useless for anybody but God, we have to take up the cross. We have to allow him to put to death these fleshly minds and hearts.

Romans 8:12–14 talks about what it means to take up your cross. The first thing those verses tell us is that we need to recognize our debt of love to the Holy Spirit. It's not to the flesh that we owe a debt of love, it's to the Spirit.

These verses also say that we have to live in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in the power of our flesh. That's not easy, because flesh comes natural. I can do flesh. But if I'm going to be a devoted Christian, I need to learn to live in the Spirit. I need to learn to live the life of the Spirit and to allow Him to live His life out through me. I need to offer this flesh to Him to use however he wants. That's what it means to take up your cross.

Romans 8:12–14 also says that I have to put to death the misdeeds of my body, that is, turn my body over to Christ. And I have to do this daily. That means every morning I have to take up that cross and put to death the misdeeds of this body and learn all over again to live in the Spirit. That's what the life of faith is all about. But if I'm going to be a devoted Christian whose devoted church grows, then I'm going to have to do this.

## We must follow Jesus

Jesus said we have to do one more thing. We have to follow Him. We have to go where He went, talk to the kind of people He talked to, give the way He gave, pray the way He prayed, minister the way He ministered, tell the truth the way He told the truth—and not be afraid of what brother or sister deacon thinks. I want to tell you something—if you follow Jesus, you'll be criticized. If you follow Jesus, you'll see persecution. And it won't be from the people of the world alone; it will also be from the people on the official board.

Our theme verses for this Conference come from Acts chapter 2, beginning at verse 42. It says this: "Those disciples gave themselves to God so completely that they were not useful to anyone else but Him, especially in the matters of the apos-



*The vision to hold General Conference in Colorado received strong support from these Brethren—who attended the Great Western Brethren Roundup in June at a facility in Estes Park near the one where Conference 2000 will be held.*

## Proposal to hold Conference in Colorado generates excitement in business session

The mountain peak of the business sessions and one of the high points of the entire Conference was consideration of a proposal that General Conference in the year 2000 be held at Estes Park, Colorado. The proposal came to Conference from the Great Western Brethren Roundup (held June 23 to 25 in Estes Park), where it had received overwhelming support from Roundup participants.

Rev. Emery Hurd, pastor of the Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church, presented the proposal, narrating an excellent slide presentation that showed the facilities at the YMCA of the Rockies Estes Park Center, where the Conference would be held, as well as views of the beautiful mountain scenery surrounding the facility. He made it clear, however, that moving Conference to Colorado would offer much more than beautiful scenery. It would expand our vision as a national church, promote a greater presence in the western United States, and provide a unique opportunity to meet western Brethren.

It was immediately clear that the proposal had caught fire with the Conference, as delegate after delegate got up to speak in favor of the plan. And when the vote was taken, not one voice was heard in opposition to the proposal.

In the discussion, strong support was also voiced for intentionally incorporating Spanish-speaking Brethren in that Conference, and for providing opportunities in conjunction with the Conference to asist in planting a new Brethren church in the area. [⇧]

*After viewing the slide presentation of the proposed location of Conference 2000 and hearing all that the Estes Park area has to offer, Rev. Brad Hardesty "moved" that Conference that year be extended to two weeks and that all business be conducted in one day!*

tles' teaching; and especially in the matter of giving themselves to the fellowship; and especially in the matter of the breaking of bread; and especially in the matter of prayer."

Brothers and sisters, I am absolutely convinced that for The Brethren Church to turn from a creek to a river, you and I, we together, will have to devote ourselves—give ourselves to God—so completely in these four areas, that like a river God's grace and mercy and goodness and purity and love will flow. And if we do that, there will be no dam that could be built, no demonly beaver big enough to dam our stream.

We must give up our common sense and get a hold of God's sense. We must not only get a hold of it, we ought to open it and read it. And when we've read it, we ought to get it out and live it. And we ought to speak it. And then, we ought to give ourselves to one another. Jesus said, "No one has any greater love than this than that he lay down his life for his friends." If we can love each other enough to lay down our lives for one another, we ought to be able to forgive each other for a cross word or a misunderstood look or an idea that didn't work.

We ought to devote ourselves so completely to fellowship that we're useless for anyone else but God. We need to devote ourselves to the breaking of bread and to the fellowshipping with one another outside the four walls of the church and inviting others to do it with us so that they have an opportunity to see that we love one another.

It's real easy for me to love you in here. But can I love you out there where people can actually see it? Did Jesus say they'll know you're my disciples by your big red or brown or blue or gray Bible. No! Did He say they'll know you are my disciples because you speak holy talk. No! *They'll know you are my disciples because they can see you loving one another.*

There's something about breaking bread together and including others that helps us make that love very manifest. Things happen around the table that can't happen at the altar or in a Bible study. We have to give ourselves to them, loving one another in word and in deed and outside the four walls.

Finally, every single movement of God since the days of our Lord began on its knees. Every single revival has been built on prayer. When we get ourselves to the place where we pray before we make a decision and not ask God to fix it after we've done it; when we get to the place where we pray first and then call the doctor; when we get to the place where we pray first and then open our wallets; when we get to the place where we pray before we get up and start our day; when we get to the place where we devote ourselves so completely to prayer that common sense leaves us and God's sense descends upon us; *then* we'll be devoted Christians. Then the devoted church will come from our midst. Then God will add to our number. AMEN! [⇧]

# Conference speaker Bill Easum seeks to jolt Brethren out of their comfort zone

CONFERENCE inspirational speaker Rev. William Easum* shared some unconventional ideas in the two messages and in the three-hour workshop he presented at General Conference. He said that he wanted to give Brethren a headache. And he succeeded!

Even his appearance was unconventional. Eschewing custom, he preached without a jacket and led the workshop in an open-collar shirt and blue jeans. But his appearance did not diminish the importance of what he had to say.



*"Blue-Jeans Bill," who always spoke without a lectern, makes an animated point during the Wednesday workshop.*

"The Ever-Widening Circle" was the theme and Acts 1:8 the text of his Tuesday evening message. Emphasizing repeatedly that this passage ("you will receive power . . . and you will be my witnesses . . .") was Jesus' last will and testimony for the church, Easum said that when Jesus calls us to be His witnesses, He is calling us to be martyrs—to give our lives away.

The problem with the church today is that it is trying to take care of itself. But Jesus says, "Go and die for Me." God doesn't care about our churches. But He does care passionately about whether we are willing to be witnesses—to give our lives away—for Jesus Christ.

This witness is to be shared in an "ever-widening circle":

- In Jerusalem—the center of religious faith, the local church itself.
- In Judea—the community, the area within ten miles or 30 minutes driving time from a growing church. Judea is totally different from Jerusalem; people in Judea don't understand our language and they hate our music.
- In Samaria—those in society whom nobody in the church wants. They could be blacks, whites, gays, or some other segment of society.
- To the ends of the earth. "The only reason the church exists is to win the world to Jesus Christ."

Easum concluded his message with two corollaries to his look at "The Ever-Widening Circle":

**First**, "When the church is a witness, it moves beyond its comfort zone." In fact, whenever an established church decides to take the Great Commission seriously, a fight ensues. Churches often lose members for two or three years.

**Second**, "New life comes to us on its way to someone else." Grace is meant to be recycled. If we keep it for ourselves, it withers and dies.

**In his Wednesday evening message**, Easum spoke on the Conference theme, "The Devoted Church . . . Grows," and on the theme text (Acts 2:42–47). He expounded on five things from this text, and touched briefly on five others:

- The devoted church in Acts 2 was persistent unto death. It would "not let go" of God's word, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Such persistence is necessary in order for the church to grow. Growing churches don't give up after one or two years, as many churches do. They take three to five years to initiate new ministries.
- It was a caring church. "It takes systems for a church to grow beyond 65 in worship." "What kind of system do you have in place at your church to allow the caring to go on when your church grows beyond 30, 40, 50, 60, or 100 people?"
- It was an innovative church—they gathered up all the money and gave it away. Some church members don't want innovation or change. "But the gospel doesn't center around us [in the church]. It centers around those who aren't here. . . . It's time for us to think about those outside."
- It was a worshipful church—glad hearts, praising God, joyful. The innovative church will worship in the style of the generation it is trying to reach. If people in their twenties come to your church and it's more like a funeral than MTV, they won't come back.
- It was a winsome church, in favor with the people. The church becomes winsome by giving practical demonstration of God's love and by having fun at worship.

Easum briefly noted that the devoted church in Acts 2 was also a sharing church; unified in its diversity; spiritual; experiencing awe; and growing in the word. He concluded with the piercing question, "What is your church devoted to?" [⇧]

**Currently a church-growth consultant, Rev. Easum pastored the Colonial Hills United Methodist Church in San Antonio, Tex., from 1969 to 1993. During his ministry attendance grew from 35 to 1,000, with single adults making up nearly half the congregation.*

## Workshop sampler

"I am convinced that discovering the role of the laity is the way back to the past and the way forward to the future. I think this is the most fundamental issue facing the church right now."

*What we've got to have [in the church] is a movement away from making decisions to making disciples. Jesus didn't say make decisions, did He? He said go make disciples.*

"This is what we've discovered: it takes 90 hours and 45 people in the average church to vote 'No' on something new."

*I am convinced that unless we discover ways to reach the 20-year-olds, the future of Protestantism as we know is over. And we're just not reaching them.*

"The church of the future will have an organization designed to get as many lay people as possible into ministry."

*Worship that's relevant and small groups that are intimate, that's the church of the future.*

# Delegates discuss two basic questions related to denominational organization

A MAJOR agenda item during Conference business sessions was the ongoing study of denominational organization. Ronald W. Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, gave a brief historical overview of Brethren Church organization; GCEC member Brenda Colijn looked at the foundation, mission, and vision for organization in The Brethren Church; and Moderator Reilly Smith explained the present state of the discussion. A panel of GCEC and Missionary Board representatives then shared their perspectives on organization and answered questions from the floor.

Conference delegates then formed into small groups to discuss two basic issues related to denominational organization:

1. Should The Brethren Church have a single visionary leader at the national level who is impowered to lead? Why or why not?

2. Can the goals of reorganization—to assure the missionary focus of the church and to provide a unified vision for denominational ministry—be best accomplished through a one-board structure or a multiple- (two or more) board structure? Why or why not?

At the conclusion of the discussion of each question, a straw poll was taken in the small groups. The results were:

- 59% in favor of one visionary leader; 16% not in favor of one visionary leader; 25% undecided (total number voting, 255).
- 47% in favor of only one board; 34% in favor of more than one board; 19% undecided (total number voting, 258).

Notes were taken of the discussion in each small group. These notes will be compiled and will serve as input to GCEC and the Missionary Board as they continue to seek to develop an acceptable model for denominational organization. GCEC hopes to be able to bring a proposal to the 1996 General Conference.

### Baptism study

Rev. Gene Eckerley, president, reported on behalf of the National Association of Brethren Church Elders that the association was not yet prepared to make a recommendation on the question of receiving into local church membership people who have previously been baptized by *any form* of believers' baptism. He indicated that elders will continue to study the subject during the coming year. His report was accepted and the issue itself was not discussed on the Conference floor.

Delegate totals for the Conference were 208 lay, 153 elders, 23 district, 5 from cooperating boards, totaling 389, down 1 from 1994. [⇧]



*Elected members of the General Conference Executive Council (GCEC), shown during their installation, are (l. to r.) Dave West, Richard Craver, John Shultz, Richard Allison, Reilly Smith, Brenda Colijn, Jan Sullivan, Ronald L. Waters, Ray Aspinall, and Gene Eckerley. New to the group are:* ***Dr. John Shultz****, moderator-elect, professor of pastoral counseling and chair of the Christian ministries department at Ashland Theological Seminary;* ***Rev. Richard Craver****, East Region Rep. (Fla. and SE Districts), pastor of the Maurertown, Va., Brethren Church; and* ***Rev. Ronald L. Waters****, member at-large, pastor of the Hammond Ave. Brethren Church, Waterloo, Iowa. Re-elected for a second term was* ***Dr. Brenda B. Colijn****, Mideast Region Rep. (Ohio and Pa. Districts), member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church (Worthington, Ohio) and adjunct professor at Ashland Theological Seminary.*

**1996 Brethren Church Planning Budget**

| | |
|---|---|
| Support and Revenue | |
| Fair Share | $425,000 |
| Contributions and bequests | 60,000 |
| Revenue | 215,000 |
| Total | $700,000 |
| Expenses | |
| Designated distribution | $98,000 |
| Materials | 110,000 |
| Salaries and related | 240,000 |
| Other | 252,000 |
| Total | $700,000 |

In approving the budget for 1996, delegates also approved an increase in the Fair Share support figure for 1996 from $31 to $33 per Church Growth Index point. This 6.5% increase is the first in four years, during which inflation has totaled more than 11%.

The budget as shown is based on 100% support from all congregations. A 70% level of support would result in a $99,000 deficiit.

# New moderator introduces 1996 theme

IN A MESSAGE that concluded the 107th General Conference of The Brethren Church, the newly-installed moderator, Dr. Richard Allison, introduced the General Conference theme for the coming year. The new theme is **Partners in the Gospel**, based on Philippians 1:5. This verse is part of a larger passage (Philippians 1:3–11) that will serve as the theme text for the 1996 General Conference.

Dr. Allison explained that the word partner in this passage is a translation of the Greek word *koinonia*, which requires an intimate, deep relationship and refers to something shared or held jointly. It implies participation as opposed to spectatorship or casualness. The word gospel is the word from which we get our word evangelism, and it means to proclaim the **good news** of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Allison went on to say that the passage gives five *(next page)*

ways in which we can become "Partners in the Gospel." We are "Partners in the Gospel" by being:

- **Partners in prayer.** This passage begins (v. 4) and concludes (v. 9) with prayer. Everything we do must likewise be undergirded, supported, and bathed in prayer.
- **Partners in evangelism.** The word gospel in verse 5 speaks of proclamation of Good News. But evangelism is more than telling others about Jesus. It continues until others are persuaded to become His disciples.
- **Partners in discipling.** In verse 6 Paul expresses his confidence that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." After persons become committed to Christ, they need to grow up in Jesus, become Christ-like.
- **Partners in leadership development.** In verse one of this chapter, Paul specifically addresses overseers (bishops) and deacons in this church. These "servant leaders" had a special responsibility to develop their skills in order to equip the rest of the congregation for ministry.
- **Partners in church planting.** The Philippian Church was itself a recent church-plant (see Acts 16). Paul began the church with just a few people, but from that small beginning a flourishing Christian congregation had developed.

Dr. Allison pointed out that these five emphases from Philippians 1:3–11 coincide with the emphases found in the "Priorities for the Nineties" adopted by The Brethren Church, namely: Becoming Like Christ, Sharing Our Faith, Training Growth Leaders, and Forming New Churches. [⇑]

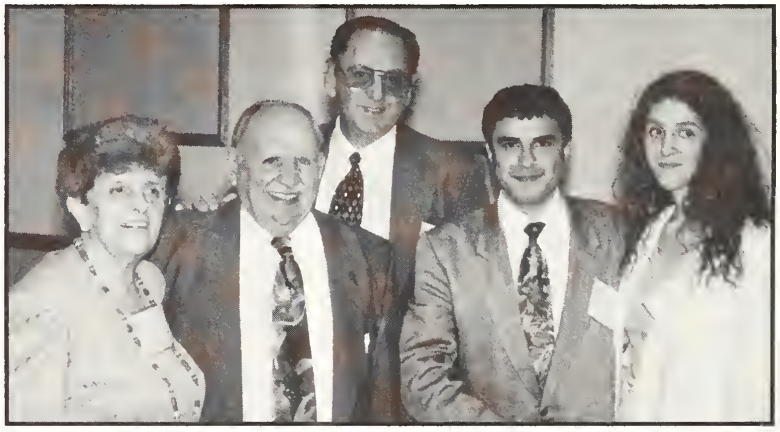
## Priorities for the Nineties

(adopted by 1992 General Conference)

1. **Becoming Like Christ** ***(Spiritual Formation)***
   To foster inner spiritual development that leads to outward action, by a deepening relationship with the Lord, through a lifelong maturing process, toward a life of obedience to Christ, lived among persons of need.
2. **Sharing Our Faith** ***(Passing On the Promise)***
   To burden, stimulate, and equip persons to share the good news of Jesus Christ through both words and actions through local church implementation of the Passing On the Promise outreach process, leading to Brethren people sharing their faith in a lifestyle of friendship evangelism.
3. **Training Growth Leaders** ***(Leadership Development for Outreach)***
   To equip and provide opportunities for persons to lead outreach ministries for Christ: pastors with an evangelistic vision; planters to begin new churches; people to lead lay ministries.
4. **Forming New Churches** ***(Church Planting)***
   To extend the ministry of the church to groups of people who have had inadequate exposure to the Christian faith, through the formation of new churches among a variety of people groups, with styles and formats appropriate to those groups.




*Rev. Kenneth and Carolyn Solomon were honored at Conference for their years of service as Brethren missionaries. Rev. Solomon spent 33 years from 1958 to the present in missionary service in South America, first in Argentina and then in Colombia, making him the senior missionary in The Brethren Church in years of service. Serving with him until her death in 1987 was his first wife, Jeannette. Ken and Carolyn, his second wife, served together in Colombia from December 1991 until July 1995. The Solomons have now retired from foreign missionary service.*



*Four guests from Argentina graced this year's Conference. The four, seen here with Dr. Juan Carlos Miranda (c.), a much earlier arrival from Argentina, were Rev. Hector and Esther Labanca (l.) and Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez (r.). The Labancas have served The Brethren Church in Argentina for many years. Rev. Labanca currently pastors the Amenabar Brethren Church in Rosario. Eduardo and Mariela came to the U.S. so that Eduardo could enter Ashland Theological Seminary this fall. Eduardo's father pastors the Colon Brethren Church, the largest Brethren church in Argentina, with an attendance of more than 500. The Rodriguezes are newly-weds and came to the U.S. six days after their July 29th wedding!*

*Also honored at Conference by the Missionary Board were: **Rev. David and Diane Kerner**, for their service in Colombia from 1987 to 1995; **Rev. Tim and Jan Eagle**, for their service in Mexico City from June 1993 to May 1995; and **Rev. Russell Gordon**, for service as Director of U.S. Ministries and Church Growth from July 1989 to October 1995.*

# The Women's Outlook Newsletter

*A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society*

**September–October 1995** **Volume 9, Number 1**

## The President's Pen

Dear Ladies,

Well, Conference has come and gone. I trust those of you who attended took home many great memories. I enjoyed visiting with old friends and catching up with "all the news." The WMS luncheon speaker, Jill Briscoe, brought a message that touched the hearts of many. She reminded us that "any place between your own two feet is a mission field." What a challenge for us!

Some changes were made in the Constitution, one being that we are now Women's (not Woman's) Missionary Society. The new Constitution will be printed in the *Devotional Guide* next year. I'm sure your editor, Joan Ronk, will be printing something in reference to the changes, if not in this newsletter, then in a later one.

As we begin a "new year" in our WMS Societies, let's make it a "goal" to increase our own society with one new member. If each society does that, we will see a nice increase by next Conference. I am sure that we all know of one woman in our church who is not a WMS member. We may have to make some changes in our meetings, but change can be good for all of us. Some thoughts for meetings are:

- Spend more time in prayer. You could do prayer partners or have "secret sisters." This will draw your group closer together. I really do not want to see WMS die for lack of members. We all need to work on this and be willing to make changes (if necessary) to continue the work as missionary women.
- Please remember that the M in WMS means MISSIONARY. That's what we are all about and we still need to keep up our work with missions. You can support local mission projects, but we still need the support of the women for home and world missions of The Brethren Church.
- The ladies in your local church may not read the newsletter and may not be aware of just what WMS does. Ask if you can have a space in your

*(continued on page 4)*

## The Devoted Church . . . Grows

Devotions presented by Marilyn Aspinall August 8, 1995

*But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you,*
*then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, . . . .*
*But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.* Joshua 24:15.

Having had the privilege of living in another culture for 30 years has been a pleasure. The joy of serving the Lord, communicating in a different language, and beginning to "feel comfortable" in that foreign culture did not happen overnight. It was a process . . . something that took time.

Getting back into our own culture is also proving to be a process . . . something which takes time. We've been in the U.S.A. now two years, and I have been reflecting upon some of the changes in attitude I have experienced during those two years, regarding what I see in my own culture. Perhaps, to be more specific, I should say what I see in the life of the church in the U.S.A. It's hard to analyze actually, because we seem to be in the middle of a turnover toward positive things. For this we praise the Lord!

When we had barely arrived in our homeland, I could see many things which caused me to have a negative attitude. There was a certain air of complacency and habit visible in some churches among believers. There was a very visible shake-up in society—many broken homes and disrespect for authority not only among young people, but also among adults who seemed to thrive by criticizing those above them. The growth in the numbers of teenage pregnancies, single parents, divorce, abortion, and violence overwhelmed me.

When reality hit, that we are here to stay and to serve the Lord now in this country, there were times I wished the furlough would end and we could get back to "the work" in Argentina.

Sounds like we lived a fruitful positive ministry those 30 years in the south, doesn't it? Time will tell what will last. The Lord put us through His refining process many times, and I know that process will continue here. We're so thankful for the "stretching" of our narrow-mindedness through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Prayer has put us on an even keel once again and we excitedly watch now to see how the Holy Spirit is going to open our eyes during the new process we are living, as we serve Him along with all of you here in the United States.

Our lessons in the WMS *Devotional Guide* have been excellent this year. I'm convinced that much prayer went into each of those lessons. There was a continued reappearing of those key verses for us from Titus 2, especially for those of us who are not new believers.

A few weeks ago I was at a meeting where many churches were represented. I was visiting with a "mature" lady from a church near ours. She mentioned that they were trying to "carry on" with one of their fund-raising projects (the serving of community dinners) and that it was "getting to be too much for us older ones and the younger ones were not coming along after them." She expressed concern for the fact that so many of them are working, too weighed down with family problems, etc., to come to any extra meetings at church. They only make it on Sunday morning, if then.

This chat caused me to later reflect upon the very real problems she had elaborated on during our conversation. I'm sure that many of our women's groups could identify with the situation we discussed. It did cause me to again think about some of the negative factors I had seen when we had just recently landed in the U.S.A. There is a danger and a need to be concerned, as we see families being caught up in an infinity of secular activities and can see that their time and energy are being sapped to the point where there is little left for participation in the church, the Body of Christ.

*(continued on page 2)*

# LOOK!

Among my famous last words were, "And we will keep the yellow paper!" However, when we compared the cost of approximately 1,400 newsletters sent only to WMS members with the cost of approximately 7,000 on white paper and included with *The Brethren Evangelist* for the same cost, I gave up the yellow paper!

The elected officers concurred this is better stewardship and an excellent outreach to those non-members, both ladies and men, who read the *Newsletter*. We hope that they—even the men—will become part of us.

I imagine some of you say, "Why do I have to pay my dues, when I would receive it anyway?" Your dues pay much more than the cost of the *Newsletter*. Dues become part of the budget; they pay costs for the *Devotional Guide* and Conference expenses; and dues add to the receipts for benevolences. Furthermore, we are not replacing any pages in *The Brethren Evangelist*; we still have to pay for our own paper, printing, and postage.

So, if you wish, color this yellow and remember that, as a woman, it's my prerogative to change my mind!

Money seems to be the favorite subject for talk! So it was, when JoAnn Seaman presented the treasurer's report.

Since 1988, WMS has been overseeing National Sisterhood funds. Even before the 1939 church split, National Sisterhood had some money invested in the Brethren Home Mission Revolving Fund (BHMRF): $8,000 earning 4% interest. Although there are some local Sisterhood groups, we do not have a "National Sisterhood" at this time. WMS was asked to be the caregiver of this fund and accept the yearly $320 interest check on Sisterhood's behalf.

In 1992, WMS Conference delegates discussed the $8,000 investment, its accumulating interest, and a Sisterhood savings account of over $1,000. Their decision was to donate the savings account and the interest to the National Crusaders' Program. The delegates also voted to keep the $8,000 invested in the BHMRF, with its yearly interest going to Crusaders (now the Summer Ministries). The consensus was that the BHMRF investment could be used, if a NEW National Sisterhood would form.

To invest or to spend? That is the question! Is it time to use the $8,000

*(continued on page 4)*

## Devotions *(continued)*

During those many years we lived on our busy city street in Rosario, we traveled mainly by bus all over that city of over one million people and also to outlying areas. Many times, at the very busiest hours, one had to be doubly careful. Often there was a certain push and shove in those overcrowded city buses which allowed things to happen, which one found out only too late to do anything about it. Because of lack of visibility, I found myself getting off before or after my originally planned bus stop. I have gotten off only to find that I had left an umbrella or a package behind. Some have had purse straps slashed and slipped off their shoulders as they descended. Some have been victims of the pickpockets, who take advantage of the crowded situation of their "clients." Many things could happen in the rushed, crowded buses we traveled in Rosario.

This makes me see an alarming parallel to what is happening in the push and shove of our busy world, as we try to live for the Lord today. We do have the right destination in mind, but there's an enemy out there who loves to see us caught up in the crowd, confused about our priorities, and he successfully "picks our pockets."

There seems to be no escape. We might all be saying secretly, "Stop the world, I want to get off!" The Bible says we should not say that things were better in the "good old days." Isaiah 43:18 states it this way: *Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.* He's urging us to get on with our living, in the time slot which God has given us today.

God is still on His throne! He sees all the problems and pressures we all live. Yet, He is still in control. Praise His name!

Problems and pressures are not new, but let's take heart. There are many positive things going on in this country. God's people are again coming alive. We have seen God's power in our own church recently. Young busy mothers rallying around each other in Christian love, praying earnestly for each other, preparing meals for the new mothers or for those going through a crisis in the family—all in the name of the Lord and done in His love and power. These are busy working mothers with little ones to care for, and yet they see the need to include God in their daily lives and experiences. They struggle to keep their priorities straight.

There is a resurgence of prayer in small groups among young people in public schools. Teenagers are pledging themselves to chastity and purity, saving their sex life for one marriage partner. I heard it reported recently on Christian radio that a local jeweler could not keep chastity rings in stock for the amount of sales he has right now. Promise Keepers for men has made an impact in the home, in our churches, and in the nation. I have seen and heard several of the nation's No. 1 sports stars attribute their success to living and doing all in Jesus' name! Mike Singleterry of the Chicago Bears, Andre Dawson of the Chicago Cubs, Reggie White of the Green Bay Packers. Athletes from top teams have given a clear testimony to many youth who see them on TV of the difference the Lord makes in their careers.

God's Word tells us in Jeremiah that His plans for us are for good and not for evil. We read in Jeremiah 29:11, *For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

Let's go forward with a positive attitude. We can and shall keep doing our job as described in Titus 2—teaching, counseling, and mentoring, so no one will malign the word of God. Some encouragement can be taken from the words of King Asa in II Chronicles 14:7: *Now is the time to do it, while the Lord is blessing us with peace, because of our obedience to him.* He told his people, *Let us build and fortify cities now, with walls, towers, gates, and bars.* Yes, let us build those walls of faith (that urges us on), the towers (a place above our troubles where the Lord can give us a new vision), the gates (His protective barrier), the bars (a sign of strength behind which we can see the enemy outside in perspective, but he can't touch us).

We live in a rapidly changing world but, as long as the Lord tarries, we need to be about His business. Let's say again with Joshua, *As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
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# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WMS CONFERENCE

Your prayers for Conference were answered! God's messengers were Spirit-filled; love and joy and peace overflowed from one to another. Safety, rest, and good health were blessings. Thanks for praying.

*Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,*
*Pure and holy, tried and true;*
*With thanksgiving I'll be a living*
*Sanctuary for you.*

This theme song prepared us for worship and meditation on devotions given by Marilyn Aspinall (Bryan), our returned missionary from Argentina. She sees life in America with a different perspective. Not only does it involve us, but it also affects us. Read and ponder her message.

Although Judy Tinkel, vice president, couldn't attend Conference, she completed many details for the program. DeAnn Benshoff (St. Luke) and Marsha Nies (Masontown) were the song leader and pianist respectively. Special music was given by Kathy Carter (Burlington), who played an arrangement for flute of "Amazing Grace," and Beth Buford (Ashland), who sang "The Lord of Glory."

Ladies from the Pennsylvania District—Adelle Ritchey (Berlin), Vera Shultz (Berlin), and Marsha Nies (Masontown)—planned the thank offering ingathering. Adelle questioned, "What are you thankful for? A box of Jell-O, delicious apple, a toy truck, hair barrette, Kool-Aid, shoelace, comb? We take for granted such ordinary things." She reminded us to give thanks for the small blessings as well as for the large ones.

The memorial service Wednesday was given by the Roann ladies. Marsha Nies and Sandra Medsger sang "Sheltered in the Arms of God." While Marsha continued to play and Sandra read the names of 26 ladies deceased during the past year, Mary Ellen Miller arranged pink rosebuds in a basket. Sandra commented that heaven is even more beautiful than this bouquet because our sisters are there.

Ladies from the Bethlehem Mary and Martha Circle planned the project ingathering at the Wednesday luncheon. Susan Kidd reminded the ladies that this was the second of a 2-year goal to give $25,000 to establish an endowment fund to pay tuition for training Malaysian pastors. Kathy Valenzon received the offerings while Dee Keplinger played.

Approximately 223 ladies attended the luncheon in Park Street's new Family Life Center. The tables were decorated in green and white. Pots of ivy in quilted flower pot covers and the green and white programs presented the theme "The Devoted Church . . . Grows." The Faith, Hope, and Joy Circles of Park Street made the programs. The ivy arrangements, given by the Milford ladies, could be purchased. Proceeds were designated for the Indiana Mission Fund.

Judi Gentle was the hostess and presented Geneva Price, who sang "We are Standing on Holy Ground."

Shirley Black introduced Jill Briscoe, who has authored 40 books, including *Heartbeat*, one of our reading circle books. Mrs. Briscoe stated that "a mission field is any distance between your own two feet." Basing her comments on Luke 5:1–3, when Jesus needed Simon's boat for His teaching, she said that Jesus needs "our boat," various gifts to help in His work. I know I need Him; He also needs me.

During the week, missionary wives brought greetings and sincere appreciation for prayers, notes, cards, and gifts. Nancy Hostetler (Riverside Christian School) said they strive daily to meet the needs of 100 students. She added the Riverside School is 90 years old!

Tracy Ruggles (Mexico City) said the Brethren in Mexico City were praying for us this week! She asked for prayers on September 18, when they begin their return trip and especially at the end of that week, when they anticipate crossing the border.

Diane Kerner (Bogotá, Colombia) requested prayers for them in a "new mission field." Dave is enrolled in graduate school in Illinois and she is in teaching. Carolyn Solomon (Medellín, Colombia) said the Lord is working in Colombia, but so is Satan. Both Carolyn and Diane requested continued prayers for the national pastors in Colombia and volunteered to translate your cards and letters. Send your correspondence to the Missionary Board, 524 College Avenue, Ashland, OH 44805, and the staff will forward it for translation.

María Miranda (radio ministry) spoke of her Spanish radio program and concluded, "If people need God, He'll take care of the finances."

Chantal and Mark Logan will teach English in Dijbouti, Africa, where the population is 90% Muslim. This is their first missionary trip without their children.

## BUSINESS

The following committees served during the week:

Credential: Betty Deardurff (Gretna) and Bonny Summy (Ashland Faith) recorded a total of 110 delegates.

Nominating: Cindy Stout (Burlington), Shirley Troop (Meadow Crest), and Patti Sweet (Wabash) nominated and conducted the election: President — Shirley Black (Ashland Hope); Vice President — Marilyn Aspinall (Bryan); Financial Secretary — Joanne Kroft (Ashland Garber); Treasurer — JoAnn Seaman (Ashland Hope).

Auditing: Karen Weidenhamer (Ashland Joy) and Alice Ingraham (Ashland Hope) audited and approved the books of the Literature and Financial Secretaries.

The treasurer's books were audited by a CPA.

Appointed Officers: The Executive Board recommended and the delegates approved the appointment of:

General Secretary, Nancy Hunn
Assistant, Trudy Kerner
Sewing and World Relief Coordinator, Joan Merrill
Editor, *Newsletter*, Joan Ronk
Editor, *Devotional Guide*, Jeanette Sullivan
Subscription Secretary, Ginny Hoyt
Literature Secretary, Kathleen Mack
Assistant, Doris Shultz

This is the budget as presented by JoAnn Seaman, treasurer, and adopted:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Benevolences** | | $16,750 |
| ATS | $4,300 | |
| World/Home Missions | 8,450 | |
| Campus Ministry | 1,500 | |
| Riverside Christian School | 1,500 | |
| Scholarship, AU | 1,000 | |
| **Publications** | | 7,665 |
| *Newsletter* | | |
| *Devotional Guide* | | |
| **Other Expenses** | | 2,185 |
| Administrative | | |
| Social Security | | |
| Gifts and Conference | | |
| **Total** | | $26,600 |

Scholarship: Carrie Lucas, a senior from Ashland Park St., received the scholarship to Ashland University.

*Devotional Guide*: Jeanette Sullivan chose the theme "Hearts of Praise" for this year's study and selected ladies to share their favorite Psalm. A bouquet of balloons on the cover suggests a spirit of buoyancy. The goals of the study in Psalms are to uplift and encourage one another and to glorify the Lord.

Brethren Service Guide: Joan Merrill announced the proceeds from the very successful auction totaled $470, which will enable home missions pastors' wives to go to Home Missions Conferences with their husbands. Joan thanked:

- all of you who sent quilt squares,

*(continued on page 4)*

## Highlights *(continued)*

- our very excellent auctioneer, Tom McConahay,
- the Linwood ladies for putting together and tying the Kids Conference comforter,
- Nancy Icenhour for her donation of two beautiful quilts,
- Alberta Holsinger for her donation of a lovely pillow, and
- of course, all our bidders.

Joan added that more quilt squares are needed in the next few months, if you want to do a quilt next year. Once again, here are the guidelines:

(1) use all cotton fabric. Squares should be at least 8½" square with the design less than 8".

(2) make your designs needlework (embroidery, cross-stitch, applique, pieced, etc.) Do not use fabric paints, etc. The needlework adds to the beauty of the finished projects.

(3) Squares can be sent anytime to her at 9300 S. St. Rt. 3, Muncie, IN 43702.

Constitution: Revisions to the WMS Constitution were presented Tuesday and the Constitution was approved Thursday. Two major changes were proposed: changing Woman's to Women's and the terms of the officers. We understand that originally WMS was organized with the thought of being a personal and individual organization. Today we see it as a society for all women. The elected officers will now serve two-year terms: the President and Financial Secretary will be elected in the odd-numbered years and the Vice President and the Treasurer in the even-numbered years. The terms of service will go into effect next year.

The National Project is funds for the purchase of a church site and building for the mission in Peru, where Miguel and Sonia Antunez minister. The goal for two years is $25,000.

### MISSIONARY MISCELLANY

Missionaries of September are Todd and Tracy Ruggles, who return this month to Mexico City. Tim and Jan Eagle completed their two-year term and Tim is now the pastor at the Ashland Garber Church. The October missionary couple is Tom and Debbie Sprowls, planters of the Medina Brethren Church, and all the workers with the STAKE project in Florida. November is Home Missions month and the Special Ministries teams are remembered: Doran and Nancy Hostetler at Riverside in Lost Creek, KY, and Phil and Jean Lersch and Bonnie Munson at Brethren House in St. Petersburg, FL. All the missionaries need and appreciate your prayer support.

## LOOK! *(continued)*

now for something other than Sisterhood? María Miranda's radio ministry? The Summer Ministries program? Brethren camps? Growing home mission churches? Do we allocate all of it now? Do we award $1,000 a year for the next eight years?

Delegates were asked to poll their societies and send their ideas to their district presidents. The WMS Executive Board will meet October 21 to study the ideas and formulate a recommendation for the next Conference.

Now is the time to discuss and make your ideas known! The WMS Board is asking for your input. Remember Proverbs 11:14, *Many advisers make victory sure.* We want to make the right decision for our Lord.

It is very important for you to return the original membership list with the necessary changes noted to Joanne Kroft when you send your dues. To do otherwise presents many problems for those keeping WMS records and for The Brethren Church National Office in the mailing process.

## President's Pen *(continued)*

church's monthly newsletter or maybe an insert in the Sunday bulletin once a quarter. Tell what your local group is doing and invite other ladies of your church to attend a meeting. They may have some good suggestions for things to do at your meeting.

- Have a program that will be of special interest to the "young" ladies of your church.

These are only a few suggestions. At the workshop held at Conference, we talked about what other ladies are doing in their churches to meet the needs of their women. Watch the *Newsletter* and *The Brethren Evangelist* for a report of this workshop. If you are doing something of special interest in your local group, please let me know.

In the book *Heart to Heart with Pastors' Wives,* one chapter is written by Gail McDonald and is about "Mentoring . . . Woman to Woman." She writes, "We all need three kinds of people around us: (1) elders who walk in front of us; (2) peers who walk beside us; and (3) the young with whom we walk. Can you think of a woman who falls in these three categories with whom you come in contact at your church? Maybe you are that woman.

Let's work together to see our WMS grow—spiritually and numerically. God Bless You.

Sincerely,
Shirley

## The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

This is the day after Conference week and I want to give you some of the good experiences of the week. I hope my enthusiasm carries this to you.

Moderator Reilly Smith installed the elected and appointed officers, but directed all of his comments to members in general. "You shall be my witnesses," Jesus said, as recorded in Acts 1:8, and Rev. Smith asked each one of us to answer "What kind will I be? A good witness or a bad witness?" My life, words, thoughts, and actions indicate the kind of witness I am and reflect whom I am following—the Lord Jesus Christ or Satan.

Mr. Smith glanced over the audience of ladies and observed the majority had gray hair or mixed, as my driver's license reads! He encouraged us to add to our midst brunettes, blonds, and auburns. Add younger ladies so they may become active participants in the Women's Missionary Society, who are women meant to serve. We need each other. We have much to learn from younger ladies and they, in turn, can learn from us as well as support the ministries of WMS.

I encourage you to invite the young ladies in your church to your meetings. First, though, plan your meetings to be interesting and attractive to others. One comment I overheard was, "Their meetings are boring." For shame! Meetings don't need to be boring! With the Psalms of Praise, the study content will not be boring. Evidently we need to ask God's help in our preparation and in our meetings. The flying balloons are a sign of exuberance, praise, and life. Let your society be like a floating balloon, not like a deflated balloon—lifeless and wrinkled.

Mr. Smith suggested that we also have fun. Blend a proper balance into your meetings. Use Lucille Woessner's suggestions for roll call; that is fun!

I pray that you will let God lead in your ministry this year. Be willing to follow Him.

Your friend,

Joan

Joan

# Jesus: Lord and Savior

**By Kenneth Sullivan**

*I am a Christian! My sins are forgiven and God has saved me through Christ's blood atonement on the cross. But I have no intention of submitting to Christ or allowing God to change my life.*

THESE WORDS were said in anger by a middle-aged former California pastor who had been forced from ministry because of his immoral conduct. He was living a lifestyle contrary to scripture, a life stained by bitterness and resentment.

He clung to a false hope that God would overlook his unrepentant attitude and rebellious spirit. He made it forcefully clear that he would not, to his dying day, obediently serve Christ. The blood of Jesus at the cross, he insisted, was all he needed to grant him permission to step through heaven's gates.

While this man's attitude may seem extreme, it represents a view held by many Christians. This man bought into a dichotomy that permits a twofold division of Christ's redemptive work. Conceivably, a person could receive Jesus as Savior, then possibly later grow enough to submit to Him as Lord.

***"No Christian ever died because Christ was his or her Savior. Christians died because Jesus was their Lord . . . ."***

Neither the Bible nor the Brethren support such a view. God does not offer us a smorgasbord of Christian options from which we may pick and choose at random. We are not offered options but an ultimatum—the choice between life and death. Jesus is our Savior precisely because we have submitted to Him as Lord (Rom. 10:9).

Christ said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk. 9:23). James likened faith without works to the kind of belief exercised by demons (Jas. 2:19). Paul told the Athenians that God "commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). He wrote to the Roman church, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). The New Testament speaks of receiving Jesus as Lord, confessing Him as Lord, submitting to Him as Lord.

When the Bible speaks of believing and submitting with our hearts, it is not referring to our emotions or to some spiritual feel-good attitude or even to a Christian religious experience. It is speaking instead of the totality of who we are (mind, will, and body) and of the surrender of all we are to Christ. Everything about us—mind, will, body—is to be brought under the lordship of Christ.

Moreover, when the Bible speaks of confessing Jesus as Lord, it doesn't just mean believing that He is divine. Jesus Himself said that confessing Him as Lord means obeying Him: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Lk. 6:46).

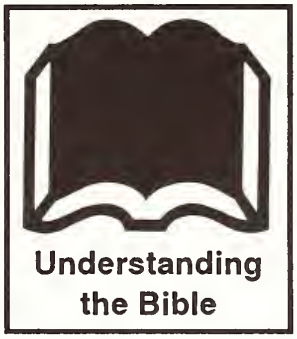
In A.D. 180 a young Christian named Speratus was arrested and charged with the capital offense of being a follower of Jesus. He was brought to the senate house of Carthage, where he was offered leniency if he would but swear allegiance to the emperor.

Speratus replied, "We have never done wrong. We have not taken part in any crime at all. We have never cursed. Even if we were ill-treated, we only gave thanks. Therefore we honor our Emperor."

The Proconsul said, "We too are a religious people, and our religion is simple. We swear by the genius of our lord the emperor and offer sacrifices for his well-being. You must do that too."

Speratus answered, "I do not recognize any empire of this present age. I serve that God whom no man has seen, or can ever see with these eyes. I have not stolen. On the contrary, when I buy anything I pay my taxes, *for I know only one Lord, the King of Kings, the Ruler of all nations.*"

What differentiated the early Christian church from all religions of its day was this issue of allegiance and submission. In New Testament times, you could have as many saviors and religions as you wanted as long as you gave primary allegiance to Caesar. No Christian ever died because Christ was his or her Savior. Christians died because Jesus was their Lord; they died because He alone could claim their ultimate loyalty.




Donald Gray Barnhouse, the great Presbyterian preacher, was working as a counselor with a Billy Graham crusade. One evening a young man came forward in response to Graham's invitation to receive Christ. The young man was having difficulty accepting the depth of his own sin and his need for repentance. "I have lived a good life and have done nothing immoral," he protested. "Of what must I repent?"

Barnhouse looked him in the eyes and said, "I charge you with high treason against God and against His Christ. Surrender now and submit to Jesus as your Lord, or perish in your sin of rebellion."

There is no area of our lives of which Jesus Christ does not say, "Mine!" What God demands of any sinner, of any person who comes to Him, is total and absolute capitulation to Christ! [⇧]

*Rev. Sullivan is pastor of the Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Church and a member of The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

Quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version.*



# Urban Immersion Experience

**By Tammie Marlowe**

TRYING TO CRAM a week's worth of ministry into a short article is a challenge. First and foremost, I am thankful for the opportunity to have participated in the Urban Immersion Experience. I thank The Brethren Church National Office for organizing it; Pastor Rickey Bolden and his wife, Glenda, for housing us; and the church body at Southeast Christian Fellowship for a warm and loving welcome.

Although the week was full of blessings, challenges, and growth experiences, several stand out that ministered to me the most. It began with my preparation for the trip through materials sent by the National Office. The book *More Than Equals*, by Spencer Perkins and Chris Rice, set the stage for God to come into my life in a special way. It challenged me and opened my eyes to my racial blindness. As the book points out, if we are not actively seeking racial reconciliation as Christians—witnesses of the gospel—then we are part of the problem.

The week started with an awesome worship service on Sunday. Not only was it a time of praise and celebration, but the word of God was preached by Pastor Bolden with enthusiasm and conviction. It was evident that the Spirit of God was flowing throughout the service, which ran over two hours.

During the week we passed many buildings that on the outside were rough, beaten up, and broken down. Not very appealing to the eyes. But once inside, they were lovely. God whispered to me—this is how it is when you look on the outside of a person's physical appearance and never take the time to look on the inside, where the true beauty lies.

One morning we went to a church that serves breakfast each day. Feeling good that I was able to help out and minister to those in need, God showed me that although I was there for one morning, I was working beside two people who had been serving every morning for 14 years. What a humbling experience! God reminded me that, yes, one person can make a difference, but it is a difference that needs to happen every day.

I was disappointed when I found out that only three of us were going to D.C. But God, in all His wisdom and glory, said, "Shame on you, for I have plans bigger than your expectations." God brought three people together that week with a loving and open body of believers. Each of those three people brought special gifts and abilities to serve the needs of the Southeast Christian Fellowship.

God never ceases to amaze me. He reminds me always that He is in control of every situation. I am thankful that the Lord granted me this opportunity to be ministered to, to grow, and to learn to love Him and those around me more. [⇧]

*Mrs. Marlowe is a member of Community Brethren Church, Mishawaka, Ind. She has lived in Harrisburg, Pa., for the past year with her husband and daughter.*

### Background

From June 17–24, The Brethren Church sponsored an Urban Immersion Experience in cooperation with Southeast Christian Fellowship, the Brethren church in Washington, D.C. Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal, then chair of the Leadership Development Commission, gave leadership to the team. Other team members were Tammie Marlowe of Harrisburg, Pa., and Ronald W. Waters of Ashland, Ohio.

The week had several purposes. Pastor Rickey Bolden and Moderator Daryl Freeman had asked Dr. Drushal to assist the church with leadership training. In addition, team members came to learn about urban life, to gain a greater understanding of minority life in America, and to join the congregation in ministry to human and spiritual needs. The experience was also designed to foster a spirit of reconciliation across racial lines.

Reflections on the experience are provided by team member Tammie Marlowe and by Southeast Christian Fellowship member Daryl Freeman.

The Brethren Church plans to offer another Urban Immersion Experience next year. Details will be released as they become available.

# Blessed by the Visit

**By Daryl A. Freeman**

THE Southeast Christian Fellowship (SECF) family was blessed by the visit of The Brethren Church's Urban Immersion Experience team of Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal, Rev. Ronald W. Waters, and Sister Tammie Marlowe. The primary purpose of the team's visit was to join in our church's effort of ongoing community evangelism and to familiarize themselves with the needs of those living in urban environments who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ into their lives.

SECF members cordially invited team members to our Father's Day Celebration Dinner at the church, to worship services, and into their homes to fellowship with them over lunch and dinner. These experiences provided great opportunities to share theological ideas. These times together also facilitated individual growth and understanding of cultural perceptions for the bet-

terment of racial reconciliation. SECF members and the team alike will treasure these times in our hearts.

The Urban Immersion Experience team also graciously accepted our invitation to meet in the evenings with members of our various boards and committees. They shared their wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and experience in church administration with our lay leaders, to help us continue our efforts to develop a ministry of excellence that is acceptable to God. On successive nights the team met separately with our finance committee, deacon board, board of Christian education instructors, and youth advisors, as well as with Pastor Bolden and myself as moderator.

The team members provided many words of encouragement. They responded to specific inquiries from the church leadership for suggestions on ways each particular group could better focus its tasks, become more responsive to the needs of our community and church congregation, and develop future lay leaders. The result of these exchanges has been a rejuvenation and rededication of our membership in seeking the Kingdom of God and of fully utilizing the body of Christ within our church. A sense of revitalization is currently taking place throughout the congregation. According to each of the team members, this experience was equally enlightening and refreshing for them.

Speaking on behalf of the entire Southeast Christian Fellowship family, we were truly blessed by the presence of the Urban Immersion Experience team and are anxious to host them once again in the near future. The assistance and contributions provided by the team have been a tremendous help to our church leadership and our efforts of magnifying the body of Christ. It is my hope that more churches within The Brethren Church could also benefit from such a wonderful and Spirit-filled experience.

*Mr. Freeman is a resident of Washington, D.C. He serves as moderator of Southeast Christian Fellowship and was elected by the 1995 General Conference to the Leadership Development Commission.*

## How are Brethren churches seeking to extend Christ's kingdom?

"WHAT NEW VENTURE is your congregation planning to embark on this year in an effort to extend Christ's kingdom?" This question appeared on a form that was given to pastors at General Conference. Following are some of their responses.

*In September we will have our first "Kids Krusade with Aunt Norma," as a means of reaching more boys and girls with the gospel. The Krusade will include puppets, clowns, songs, prizes, Bible stories, memory verses, and a king and queen. The king and queen will be the boy and girl who bring the most visitors.*

*In addition, we will continue in September and October a process we began in June of this year of passing out a gospel tract and a brochure about our church to every home in Masontown. We are also sending a Christian newspaper to every home in Masontown.*

*— Pastor Curt Nies, Masontown, Pa., Brethren Church*

This fall we will begin Good News Clubs in various areas. There has been a recent growth spurt in our rural area, and we expect this to continue. Our plan is to reach out to the children, many of whom live in trailer courts. We will expand this same outreach next spring.

— Pastor Jim Thomas, Loree Brethren Church, Bunker Hill, Ind.

*We will be investigating and implementing a second worship service and also begin an outreach ministry in a nearby mobile home park. In addition, we will be making a number of internal organizational changes in order to minimize "bureaucracy" and maximize ministry.*

*— Pastor Tim Garner, First Brethren Church of Elkhart, Ind.*

We will be co-leading a city-wide evangelistic conference. A total of nine churches will be involved. Internally, we are also proposing to make the Deacon Board of our church the "Pastoral Care" board for our congregation, that is, a group that provides "pastoral care" to the church body.

— Pastor G. Emery Hurd, Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church

*We are planning a Block Party for our neighborhood. Invitations will be delivered to every home within a two- or three-block radius of the church. Food, beverages, games, etc., will be totally free to those who come.*

*We are also implementing an internal greeter system at the church, with persons trained to take visitors after they have been greeted by the regular greeters at the door and involve them in conversation, introduce them to other people, and shepherd them through their first experience at our church. These greeters will also remember and befriend these visitors on subsequent visits.*

*— Pastor Jim Naff, First Brethren Church of Peru, Ind.*

These are a few new ventures that are being planned by Brethren congregations in an effort to extend Christ's kingdom? What about your church. Are you starting a new outreach ministry, beginning a special ministry, or seeking to reach out in some other way? Let us know about it. If it's in the planning stages, let us know your plans. And if it is something you've already done, send us a report telling how it went, its successes and failures. Let's share with one another our efforts to reach others for Jesus and to extend Christ's kingdom in our world.

*— Richard C. Winfield, Editor*




## Central District Conference held July 14–15 at Lanark

**Lanark, Ill.** — A banquet and worship service on Friday evening began the Central District Conference, held July 14–15 at the Lanark First Brethren Church. Rev. James R. Black brought the message during the worship service.

The conference continued on Saturday morning with a worship service that featured a message by Moderator-Elect Gary Turner. This service was followed by morning and afternoon business sessions chaired by Moderator Kenneth Sullivan.

In his address, Moderator-Elect Turner centered on two issues: the need for a vision upon which the district can focus, and the need for more active involvement by a greater number of individuals. His two recommendations at the conclusion reinforced his message. The first was that delegates reaffirm the recommendations from the 1994 district conference, "but this year commit to resolve and action." The second was that district bylaws be modified to permit "an expanded commitment and involvement level."

Serving the district with Moderator Turner during the year ahead will be the new moderator-elect, Ellis Boughton of the Lanark Church, as well as secretary Doris Geisz, assistant secretary Gini Hutchison, treasurer Sue Michael, and assistant treasurer Melva Staples (all re-elected to their respective positions). Next year's conference was set for July 12–13 at the Hammond Avenue Brethren Church in Waterloo, Iowa.



*The Louisville Brethren Bible Church building gets a new roof.*

## New pastor, new roof cause for rejoicing at the Louisville Brethren Bible Church

**Louisville, Ohio** — Brethren at the Louisville Brethren Bible Church are praising the Lord for a new pastor and a new roof.

The new pastor is Paul Sluss, who began serving the congregation on Sunday, August 27. Pastor Sluss is a Brethren student at Ashland Theological Seminary. The congregation is also pleased that Pastor Sluss's wife, Jennifer, will be sharing her spiritual gifts with the congregation.

The badly-needed new roof on the church building was made possible in part by the hard-working women on the church's Social Committee. Each year this committee sponsors a flea market. For six years beginning in 1988, profits from this event (averaging $850 a year) were put in a savings account for repairs to the roof. But the roof continued to get worse and the price higher. And it became apparent that the roof needed to be replaced rather than repaired.

This year the Lord led the congregation to sell the parsonage. With money from this sale and the savings from the flea markets, the congregation was able to put a new roof on the building. And with the new roof in place, the Social Committee was able to use money from this year's flea market to purchase a television, VCR, and cart for the youth program.

## White Dale Church celebrates 100th anniversary

**Terra Alta, W. Va.** — Members of the White Dale Brethren Church near Terra Alta celebrated the 100th anniversary of their congregation on Sunday, July 16. In addition to Sunday school and worship, the celebration included a covered dish meal and an afternoon service. Rev. Donald Matthews, pastor of the congregation from 1956 to 1962, was the guest speaker for the special service.

The White Dale Church is a cooperative congregation, with both Brethren and Church of the Brethren members. The congregation was organized in 1895 by Progressive Brethren who had left the German Baptist Brethren Church. A meeting house was constructed that same year, which has since undergone several improvements and remodelings. In 1936 some members of the Church of the Brethren who had moved to the community joined forces with members of the White Dale congregation, and the cooperative church was formed.

Rev. Stanley Waybright is the current pastor. He has served the congregation since 1971.



news from around the denomination

## Briefly Noted

**Raystown Brethren Church** of Saxton, Pa., hosted a musical service by Vision Ministries on Saturday evening, July 1. A picnic at the home of Pastor and Mrs. Alfred Chamberlain on Saturday afternoon gave Raystown Brethren an opportunity to meet Vision Ministries team members Rich Rader and Matthew Fischl. Then at 7:00 p.m. the two men shared their musical talents with the congregation. According to reporter Susan Weimert, "We truly enjoyed the singing, the fellowship, and the sharing of God's word!"

**Rev. Keith and Marjorie Bennett** have joined the team of workers who are "Winning the Race at Indy" by planting cells of a new Brethren church in the greater Indianapolis, Ind., area. They join church planters Rev. Tom and Tiona Conrad and tentmakers Jeff and Cindy Gilmer and Joe and Delilah Garrett. The Bennetts served most recently at the Muncie, Ind., First Brethren Church and earlier were the founding pastoral couple of the Bloomingdale Brethren Church in Valrico, Fla. The Bennetts will serve in the "Indy" work as tentmakers.

### In Memory

Brethren elder **Rev. Roy E. Amstutz**, 78, died July 27. He was born June 20, 1917, in Smithville, Ohio, where he became a member of the Smithville Brethren Church. He was a graduate of Ashland College (1968) and Theological Seminary (1973) and was ordained an elder at the Smithville Brethren Church in 1967. He served successively two United Methodist congregations. He was married August 20, 1944, to Wava Harris, who survives. Also surviving are four children (Joyce, Janet [Gardner], John, and Jim), eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Services were held July 29 at the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, where Rev. Amstutz was a member, with Pastor Arden Gilmer officiating.

## Ordination service held for L. Eugene Oburn

**Pleasant Hill, Ohio** — L. Eugene Oburn was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife, DeAnn, was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held Sunday, June 4, at the Pleasant Hill First Brethren Church.

Rev. Gene Eckerley, former pastor of the Pleasant Hill Church, gave the message for the service. Assisting with the service were the current pastor, Rev. Bob Westfall; Rev. Lynn Mercer, pastor of the Gretna, Ohio, Brethren Church and moderator of the Ohio District; and Joe Deeter, moderator of the Pleasant Hill congregation.

Vanessa Gordon and Geneva Price, married daughters of the Oburns, sang a duet for the service, and Geneva also sang a solo.

Gene joined the Pleasant Hill Church at the age of 10. He graduated from Newton High School in 1959 and attended Ashland College from 1960 to 1961. In 1966 he married DeAnn Benshoff of Johnstown, Pa. A member of Johnstown Third Brethren Church, DeAnn was a 1962 graduate of Johnstown Central High School and a 1966 graduate of Ashland College.

Gene and DeAnn settled in Pleasant Hill, where they both became active members of First Brethren Church. They also became the parents of four children, Nathan, Vanessa, Geneva, and Ben. After working in secular employment for a number of years, Gene felt a call to pastoral ministry. In 1991 he quit his job and the Oburns moved to Ashland, where Gene entered Ashland Theological Seminary. He received his Master of Divinity degree from the seminary just eight days before his ordination.



*Rev. and Mrs. L. Eugene Oburn*

While in seminary, Gene became student pastor of the Williamstown, Ohio, First Brethren Church. Gene and DeAnn now live in Williamstown, where Rev. Oburn continues to pastor that congregation.

*— reported by Betty J. Shellenberger*

## New members, new pastor at Garber Brethren Church

**Ashland, Ohio** — Sunday, June 4, was an exciting day at the Garber Brethren Church in Ashland. On that Sunday morning, seven persons who had been attending the church and who had confessed their faith and attended the pastor's class were baptized by interim pastor Rev. Bill Kerner.

But there's more. Following the baptisms, Rev. Tim Eagle, who had just recently returned from Brethren mission service in Mexico City, presented a devotion on the meaning of baptism. After the worship service, a congregational business meeting was held in which members of the congregation voted on whether to call Rev. Eagle as their pastor. The vote was affirmative, and Rev. Eagle became pastor of the congregation in July.

The excitement that began June 4th continued the following Sunday. On that day, the seven people who had been baptized the previous week, plus five others who had been baptized earlier, were received into church membership. Several of these new members were the fruit of a new outreach ministry that was started earlier this spring at the Garber Church.

*— reported by Tim Mills, moderator*

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Brethren missionary **Dr. K. Prasanth Kumar** was recently chosen honorary president of the Andhra Pradesh auxiliary of the Bible Society of India.

news from around the denomination
THE BRETHREN CHURCH - 1708

## Brethren from Pennsylvania meet for district conference

**Meyersdale, Pa.** — Brethren of the Pennsylvania District met at Camp Peniel July 20–22 for worship and fellowship and to conduct the business of the district.

Times of worship during the three-day conference were led by Ellie Lynch and Rev. Keith Hensley, followed by devotional talks by Rev. Harold Walton. Rev. Walton's messages from Psalm 119 focused on the importance of God's word in the lives of Christians.

An unusual situation occurred Thursday evening when the moderator, moderator-elect, and secretary were not present for the first business session. The task of chairing the meeting fell to assistant secretary Nancy McGraw (assistant secretaries be forewarned!). Moderator Carl Phillips did arrive in time to chair the remaining business sessions and to deliver his moderator's address.

Moderator Phillips spoke on the need for Christians to "Stand in the Gap." God plans for His church to succeed even though the people He has to work with are like clay pots —chipped, cracked, and cheap.

The three district crusaders—Monica Hoffman, Michelle Rosie, and Jeremy Tarr—presented a brief program, and were, in turn, presented certificates of appreciation for their service during the summer. An award was also presented to Ron Brown, a Sunday school teacher in the Brush Valley Brethren Church, recognizing him for the impact he has had on his students. This is an annual award now being given by the district Board of Christian Education.

Rev. Phillips, who was elevated from moderator-elect to moderator this year when the moderator moved from the district, will serve another year. Elected to serve with him were Harold Walton, moderator-elect; Nancy McGraw, secretary, and Lorinda Schildt, assistant secretary; Grace Grumbling, treasurer, and Jim Miller, assistant treasurer; and Doyle Paul, statistician. The 1996 conference will be held July 25–27 at Camp Peniel.

## Linwood Church seeing prayers for workers answered

**Linwood, Md.** — The Linwood Brethren Church takes seriously the words of Jesus, "Ask the Lord of the harvest . . . to send out workers into his harvest field." The Linwood Brethren are asking, and the Lord is answering their request.

Ronald Miller, Sr., is one answer. Ron, his wife, Sandy, and their sons, Ron, Jr., and Bobby, first visited the Linwood Church a little over four years ago. Ron had been active in the United Methodist Church. But from the family's first visit to Linwood, they felt that they had found their place of worship and service.



*Ronald Miller, Sr.*

When Linwood Pastor Bob Keplinger made his initial visit to the Miller family, Ron asked about the requirements for Brethren pastors. Pastor Keplinger gave a rather off-the-cuff answer and went on to other things. But later he realized that this was more than a superficial question. Ron showed a depth of interest in active ministry.

Ron and Sandy renewed their faith, were baptized in the Brethren tradition, and were truly filled with the Spirit. Not long after that they presented themselves for Christian ministry in The Brethren Church. Ron was called for licensing by the Linwood Church and approved by the Southeastern District Board of Spiritual Overseers.

Next, in 1993, the Linwood Church called Ron to be the assistant to the pastor, but with the stipulation that he further his education under the direction of Ashland Theological Seminary. For the next two years he took extension work from the seminary while serving at Linwood and continuing to work full time in secular employment. But the time was coming for him to become a resident student at the seminary.

So in August, the Millers moved to Ashland, and Ron begins classes at the seminary this month (September). Ironically, while in Ashland, the Millers are living in a home owned by Linwood members Buzz and Ann Sandberg, who also now live in Ashland. And Ron has already become student pastor of a small church in the Ashland area.

In two or three years, the Millers will return to Linwood, and Ron will assume the pastorate of the Linwood Church. In the meantime, another very capable young man, Scott Robertson, will be helping with pastoral responsibilities at the Linwood Church. Scott was called for licensure on July 23 and is serving as assistant to the pastor.

Furthermore, Pastor Keplinger, who plans to retire in a few years, has publicly announced that he is looking and praying for candidate number three for pastoral ministry from the Linwood Church.

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Vol. 117, No. 9 | A newsletter for Brethren people | October 1995

Ronald W. Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, asks:

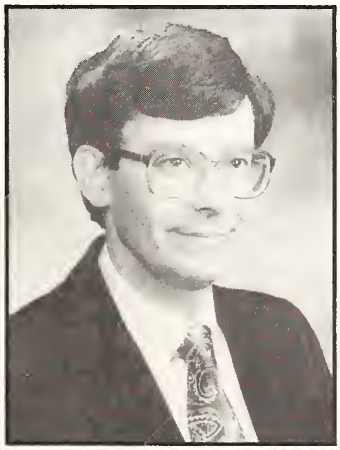
## How receptive are you to change in the church?

MOST OF US dread change. We avoid it if possible. While some say that "variety is the spice of life," most of us prefer to keep "variety" limited to little things. But major change—that's another matter.

Change is inevitable. "Death and taxes" are not life's only certainties. You don't have to take a very long look around to discover we live in a rapidly changing world.

And change can be good. I, for one, would not choose to give up some of the "necessities" that have resulted from change—things like indoor plumbing, gas and electric appliances, automobiles, the electric light bulb.

When change comes to church, however, that's another matter. We are right to be wary of any suggestion that would alter the unchanging message of the gospel. Some things are absolutes and should be defended.



*Rev. Ronald W. Waters*

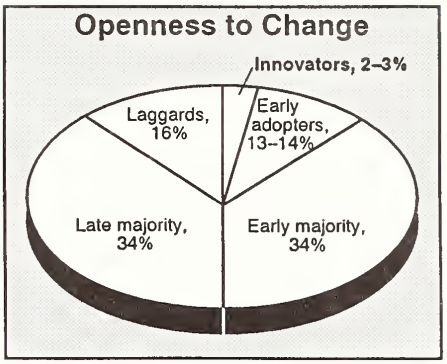
But much of what we do in the practice of our faith does not fall into the "absolutes" category. A careful reading of the New Testament reveals that our Lord has allowed great liberty in many areas of the Christian life, including freedom in church organization, worship styles, titles of church leaders, and whether or not to even have a designated church building.

Did you realize that the Sunday school is a rather recent creation (just over 200 years old)? That *Silent Night* was first played in church on a guitar? That the melodies for some hymns were based on common tunes (even drinking songs)? That other English versions of the Bible were widely-used before the King James Version? That early Brethren met mostly in small-group Bible studies in their homes?

### Categories of openness

Change comes easier for some of us than for others. In his book, *Diffusion of Innovation,* Everett Rogers has identified five categories of openness to change.

- About 2–3% of all people are *innovators*—venturesome people for whom change is an obsession. Their motto is "If it ain't broke, break it!" Innovators are usually viewed with suspicion, but they take the risks that result in launching new ideas and inventions.
- *Early adopters* (13–14% of the population) serve as opinion leaders for others. They try out and modify the innovators' new ideas and make them respectable.
- The *early majority* are more deliberate about adopting new ideas. They include about one-third of all people.
- The *late majority*—another third of the populace—are skeptical of new ideas. For them, almost all uncertainty about a new idea must be removed before they will adopt it. Unfortunately, they often adopt new ideas only from a survival mentality rather than seeing new ideas as new opportunities.




- Rogers calls the final group *laggards.* These are the 16% or so of people who only adopt an idea after most everyone else has already moved beyond it to something newer. Rogers says these people have their attention fixed on the rear-view mirror rather than on the road ahead.

Into which category do you fit when it comes to innovations in your church? Are you out in front, leading the charge? Are you cautious, waiting to see what others think? Or are *(continued on next page)*

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Receptivity to change (cont.)

you dragging your feet, holding on to the past for dear life?

I am reaching a time in life when some new ideas do not appeal to me. I find I'm stuck in the 1960s and 1970s in the music styles I prefer. I'm just getting over the spiritual arthritis that prevents me from raising my hands in worship to God. While I'll always appreciate Bach's beautiful pipe organ music, I do enjoy keyboard, guitar, drums, base, and saxophone accompaniment for praise choruses and scripture songs in worship. And while I'm not ready myself to jump fully into a country western music style for worship, I'm happy to give permission to my church to offer such a service.

We don't personally have to *prefer* all the new worship styles or other innovations in the practice of our faith. But we can give permission to others to try new ideas and styles that may speak to the unsaved and the unchurched —even if we are laggards in our own preferences.

The Apostle Paul said, "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor. 9:22–23, *NIV*). And that's the key to implementing (and giving permission for) new ideas: "for the sake of the gospel."

Can you imagine Paul traveling the country with a hip-hop band? Happy permission-giving! [⇧]

# What happened to the September issue? and other questions about the EVANGELIST

YOU HEARD that beginning in September, the EVANGELIST was going to be sent to every Brethren home. When you went so long without receiving a copy, perhaps you began to think that you had somehow been excluded.

Yes, the September issue was a long time in reaching you, and I sincerely regret that. The extended delay was due to a combination of things—the usual extra time it takes to put together the September issue after Conference; the added complication this year of changing to a new format; and the additional time required to print, assemble, and address twice as many copies. But in addition to all this, the printing press broke down!

Tim Mills of the Brethren Printing Company had the issue two-thirds printed when the press stopped running. Because of the age of the press and the nature of the problem (in the electrical system), the press could not easily be repaired. In fact, as of this writing (September 29), the press has still not been fixed. Fortunately, Mr. Mills was finally able to finish printing that issue on the Printing Company's small press (more than twice as much work and half the fun!).

It would have been bad enough for this to happen at any time. But for it to happen on the very issue that initiated the change from a magazine of limited distribution to a newsletter that is to go to every Brethren home is extremely embarrassing! But that's life!

## Are you receiving more than one copy?

As we attempt to send the EVANGELIST to every family or individual who is an active member or participant in a Brethren church, we are drawing on a variety of sub-lists in our computerized address list. Over the years, some people have been put into the address list in more than one way (by formal name, nickname, husband's name, wife's name). Your help in eliminating this duplication will be appreciated.

So if you are receiving more than one copy, please remove the mailing labels from all copies and send them to THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. *Please indicate which address we should use.*

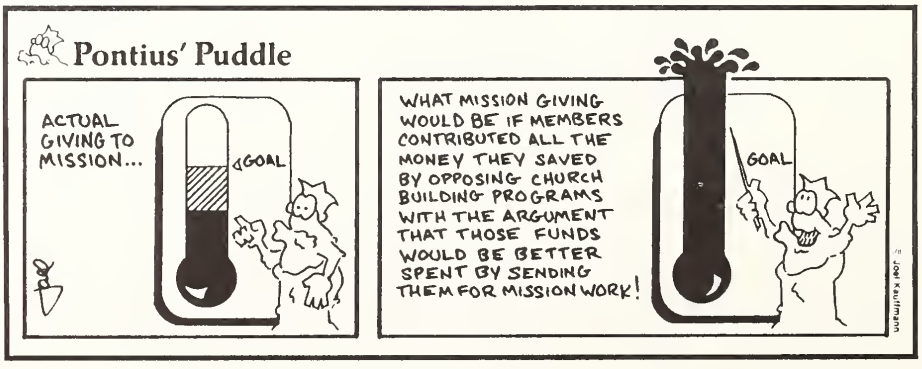
## What about deaths, weddings, etc.?

Some are asking if we will continue to include "In Memory," "Goldenaires," "Weddings," and "Membership Growth" in the EVANGELIST in its new format. As a general rule, these will no longer be included. There are several reasons for this. First, lack of space. Second, only a few churches have been reporting these on a regular basis, giving a distorted picture of the denomination. Third, many of the deaths, weddings, and anniversaries that were reported were of people not known outside their local churches, and therefore the reports were of little interest to others.

But there is room for exceptions. Deaths of former pastors and of other persons widely known in the denomination or in a district will be included. Likewise, reports of significant increases in membership (in terms of number or circumstances) will also be accepted—but send us the "story," not just a number. (See, for example, "New members, new pastor at Garber Brethren Church" on page 11 of the September issue.) In general, items of interest to a cross section of EVANGELIST readers will be included. So if you have such an item to share, by all means report it. Thank you for your interest and your reports.

*— Editor Dick Winfield*

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# Leadership, the key to hope for The Brethren Church

**By David Cooksey**

SOMETIMES, in moments of weakness or frustration, I find myself asking, "Is there any hope for The Brethren Church?" Well of course there is! Anyone who has read the EVANGELIST or information from the Missionary Board, Ashland Theological Seminary, or Ashland University knows that good things are happening. There is even hope for the small church, the poor church, and the dying church.

But not all Brethren people believe there is hope. In fact, some of them think things are pretty hopeless.



*Rev. Dave Cooksey*

Where does our hope lie? Certainly it lies in the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But it is also found in the pastoral and lay leadership of every Brethren church.

Leaders, in order to function, must not be tied down by external forces. At the same time, leaders must have a sensitive awareness of people and their needs, an awareness that motivates and influences how they spend time with their congregations.

When I look across the denomination, it is obvious to me not only where good leadership exists, but also where good leaders are allowed to lead. Leadership is everything. Where it flourishes, growth happens. It is like having the proper atmosphere on a planet to sustain life. In our solar system only earth fills the bill. The other planets are still planets; they just don't support life.

The same is true of churches. A congregation may have all the visible attributes of a church, but if it does not have the proper atmosphere to support life in the form of good leadership, growth will not occur. We can make all kinds of excuses and claim there is spiritual growth even though there is no numerical growth. But the truth is, growth provides evidence of life in everything, including the church.

Leadership is influence. We have been taught that position and title determine leadership. But this is not so. The person with the most influence in any group at any particular time is the leader of that group. Therefore, to effect growth and to bring about change in the right direction, it is necessary to identify the influencers and work with them.

If these leaders will not exert their influence to facilitate growth, then the pastor needs to find another church that really means what it says about growing. The same is true for the church; if a pastor is not willing or able to lead, then the church should find a pastor who is.

The key is setting the direction cooperatively, with everyone going in the same direction for the same reasons, without some in the church hindering that movement. Some of our churches need to quit playing church and actually become one.

We know that growth means change, and change is not easy for most people. Even the most forward-looking folks find change difficult. There are only a couple of points we reach that change us; when we hurt enough that we have to change, and when we learn enough that we are able to change.

Let me say again what I have said so often: The National Office stands ready to help local churches in every way it can. We don't want to tell you what to do; we only want to help you draw your own conclusions. We don't waste your money; we try to make the best possible use of resources and people for kingdom growth through The Brethren Church. Together we can and must make a difference. Let's let it happen! [⇧]

*Rev. Cooksey is Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church. This article is an edited version of the written "Spiritual State of the Churches" report he presented to General Conference in August.*

**Brethren churches with the greatest increase in average worship attendance from 1993 to 1994.***

| | |
|---|---|
| Mt. Zion Fellowship (Cleveland, Ohio) | 100 |
| Main Street (Meyersdale, Pa.) | 43 |
| Masontown, Pa. | 42 |
| Southeast Christian Fellowship (Washington, D.C.) | 27 |
| Nappanee, Ind. | 24 |
| Park Street (Ashland, Ohio) | 23 |
| Fremont, Ohio | 20 |
| Mt. Olive (Pineville, Va.) | 20 |
| North Manchester, Ind. | 17 |
| Tucson First, Ariz. | 17 |

**Brethren churches with the greatest increase in membership from 1993 to 1994.***

| | |
|---|---|
| Vinco (Mineral Point, Pa.) | 31 |
| Krypton, Ky. | 26 |
| Mt. Olive (Pineville, Va.) | 26 |
| Winding Waters (Elkhart, Ind.) | 24 |
| Nappanee, Ind. | 23 |
| Main Street (Meyersdale, Pa.) | 22 |
| North Manchester, Ind. | 21 |
| Falls City, Nebr. | 18 |
| Waterbrook (Elkton, Va.) | 16 |
| Northwest Chapel (Tucson, Ariz.) | 14 |
| Valley (Jone Mills, Pa.) | 14 |

**Brethren churches with the greatest percentage of increase in average worship attendance from 1993 to 1994.***

| | |
|---|---|
| Main Street (Meyersdale, Pa.) (41 to 84) | 105% |
| Masontown, Pa. (47 to 89) | 89% |
| Fremont, Ohio (27 to 47) | 74% |
| Matteson, Mich. (12 to 20) | 67% |
| Southeast Christian Fellowship (Washington, D.C.) (52 to 79) | 52% |
| Falls City, Nebr. (32 to 48) | 50% |
| Teegarden (Walkerton, Ind.) (22 to 30) | 36% |
| Krypton, Ky. (43 to 58) | 35% |
| Carmel, Ind. (31 to 40) | 29% |
| Tucson First, Ariz. (61 to 78) | 28% |

**The information in these three boxes was taken from the statistical reports in the 1993 and 1994 **Annual Reports** prepared for the 1994 and 1995 General Conferences. If you would like the statistics for your church or more information about other congregations, ask your pastor or a delegate to Conference to share these reports with you.*

# Back to the Future: Women's Ministry in The Brethren Church

**By Carolyn Cooksey and Julie Schiefer**

THE HOLY SPIRIT is speaking to men and women across our denomination. God is working in us and through us to renew the vision of who we are and what we must do as a church to spread the Good News to this generation.

The Brethren Church has determined its priorities for this decade: to grow spiritually; to share our faith more intentionally; to encourage, develop, and support leadership; and to form new churches. All of us who call ourselves Brethren are to be growing, sharing, leading, serving, and praying. We need to do it alone and with others in our congregations, our districts, and our denomination.

The women of the church are no exception. The Holy Spirit is speaking to women across the denomination. God is calling and gifting women with a variety of exciting, innovative ways of ministry. How are we meeting the challenge and opportunity of this movement of the Spirit in our changing world?

The Spiritual Formation Commission takes seriously the priorities of the denomination. It sponsored a workshop at General Conference entitled "Back to the Future: Women's Ministry in The Brethren Church." The goal of the workshop was to examine women's ministry—past, present, and future—and to give women a chance to dialogue, ask questions, brainstorm, share experiences, and present their vision for themselves as members of The Brethren Church. Twelve women representing twelve perspectives, shared experiences and told of the many opportunities available to women.

**Carolyn Cooksey** presided over the workshop and presented some of the dilemmas facing women as they seek to minister in the church.

## Opportunities through W.M.S.

**Shirley Black**, president of the national Women's Missionary Society (W.M.S.) shared a brief history of W.M.S., which over the years has given women an organized outlet for service. Through this organization Brethren women have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for missions and other projects.

**JoAnn Seaman** mentioned some of the current projects and activities of national W.M.S. She also told how she has benefited from being part of a nurturing W.M.S. group at Park Street Brethren Church.

> *"Our desire is to see every person equipped for ministry and given opportunity and encouragement to accomplish all that God desires that person to be and to do for His kingdom."*

**Anita Hollewell** shared the dynamics of a W.M.S. group that is using a flexible, gifts-oriented approach to enable busy moms and working women to participate. For example, outreach projects, such as making care packages for college students, are done during their meeting time. They keep refreshments simple. They choose fund-raising projects that can be done quickly, with as little time away from home and family as possible.

Many other women have been instrumental in beginning ministries that provide opportunities for spiritual growth, service, and evangelistic outreach. These care/share/prayer groups take a variety of forms to fit the local congregation.

**Cindy Smith** told of a group that emerged in her congregation that enabled women to nurture and support one another and also to reach out to community needs in simple, tangible ways. Their involvement with a local school was positive and much-appreciated.

**Ann Miller** did some reaching out of her own by inviting a number of women—some Christian, some not—to her home for Bible study. Since most of the women had small children, Ann needed a little creativity. Her solution: let the kids have the family room while the moms had their Bible study in Ann's bedroom! Ann provided samples of materials and told about methods for prayer and study that are of benefit to women in all stages of life.

**Shirley Scott** is half of a Prayer-Partner team. Women at the Smoky Row Brethren Church for several years had Secret Sisters, but this year they decided instead to have Prayer Partners. Prayer Partners, who either select one another or are assigned, choose to meet weekly, twice monthly, or whenever it fits their schedules. They have found that meeting regularly with another person to share and pray results in personal spiritual growth as well as a bonding relationship with a sister in Christ. The women are seeking God and are seeing God at work in their lives and in the world.

**Julie Schiefer** presented another model of ministry. She spoke of their women's fellowship as a "non-organization" but as one which has become a powerful source of ministry for their women. The group meets monthly for study, fellowship, prayer, and service. These times together provide an opportunity for the women to care for one another and to give witness that God changes things and people and that He heals and restores as well as providing for our needs.

## Opportunities beyond the local church

Up to this point, discussion had centered primarily on local-church organizations. The women who spoke next shared experiences that went beyond local congregations.

**Carolyn Brandon** used both prose and poetry to relate her experience of personal growth. She attended a Brethren Way of Christ weekend. This is an intense, three-day retreat to renew and strengthen the faith of Christians. Separate weekends are held for men and women, usually in March and in October or November. Interested persons can contact

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*Mrs. Cooksey is a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, and serves on the Spiritual Formation Commission of The Brethren Church. Mrs. Schiefer is a member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church in Worthington, Ohio, where her husband is the pastor.*

Mrs. Brandon, or Warren Garner through the North Manchester, Ind., First Brethren Church.

**Tracy Whiteside** is a leader for Bible Study Fellowship International. These non-denominational groups meet weekly during the school year for in-depth study on a yearly theme. Participants are assigned to small groups for discussion and fellowship. Members can also drop in on other Bible Study Fellowship meetings when visiting other cities. Contact Tracy for additional information.

**Sue Mercer** completed the panel presentation by outlining a new program among women of the Gretna Brethren Church that works with junior high and high school girls. The program includes personal mentoring, a mailbox ministry, Moms in Touch, and prayer groups that pray specifically for children (regularly and for a "solid hour"). Moms in Touch is a national organization that has guidelines for starting local groups and suggestions of ways to encourage school staff.

What a wealth of diverse opportunities these women shared! It was apparent that spoon-fed Christians are learning to feed themselves and are embracing the opportunity to feed others as well.

As the workshop continued, **Sherry Bowling** told of her research into the rich heritage of good, exciting, powerful women in our church who established a legacy we must continue to maintain. She gave examples of women of the past who pastored churches, sought ordination, and encouraged all members to ministry. Using past and present statistics, she challenged us to enlarge the role of women in the church today.

The workshop was well-attended and well-received. It was good to see women talking about these opportunities both to receive and to give ministry. The Holy Spirit is speaking to both women and men across our denomination. How are we going to respond? It is up to the women of today to define their vision for women in The Brethren Church —both now and in the church of the future.

Our desire is to see every person equipped for ministry and given opportunity and encouragement to accomplish all that God desires that person to be and to do for His kingdom. How can women be all that God desires for them to be in the church? God has led us to a point of examination and discovery. Let us join together in prayer for God's wisdom and guidance as we continue to seek answers to this important question. [⇧]

## A memorial tribute to the woman who wrote "Jesus Calls Us"

**By Julia Flora**

OCTOBER 12 marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Cecil Frances (Hymphreys) Alexander, one of the greatest female hymn-writers and author of the well-known hymn, "Jesus Calls Us."

Born (in 1818) and raised in Ireland, she began writing poems at an early age. By the time she was nine, her poetry was being published in a small periodical that circulated within her family.

As a young woman, Cecil devoted her time to the religious education of children. She believed that children could best be taught the substance of Christian creeds and special Christian days through poetry. So she wrote hymns for her students and read the verses to them.

In 1846 her first book, *Verses for Holy Seasons*, was published, which contained a hymn for every Sunday and other special days. Two years later another book, *Hymns for Little Children*, was published. This small book of 72 pages sold a quarter of a million copies in 20 years and by 1896 reached its 69th edition.

In 1850 Cecil married Rev. William Alexander. Two years later her hymn, "Jesus Calls Us," was first published—in a volume called *Hymns for Public Worship*. It was designated for St. Andrew's Day (November 30).

Mrs. Alexander's husband was very supportive of her hymn-writing. Once he read to her a pamphlet which told of the great change that had come in the heart and life of a man when he heard one of her hymns sung. Looking directly at her husband, this usually humble poet said, "Thank God! I do like to hear that."

As a minister's wife, Mrs. Alexander spent much time traveling over miles of wet moorland, mountains, and bogs in all kinds of weather carrying food, warm clothing, and medical supplies to the impoverished and sick of her husband's parish. In one cottage she found a woman with a serious wound who had no one to care for her. Every day for six weeks Mrs. Alexander visited the woman to wash and dress the wound until it was healed.

In 1867 her husband became a bishop, and later he was made Archbishop of Ireland. As the Archbishop's wife, she hosted many distinguished dignitaries and shared the publicity of her husband's prominent life. But she was as much at home in the impoverished areas as she was in the Archbishop's Palace, as their home was called.

**Other well-known hymns by Cecil Frances Alexander:**

*All Things Bright and Beautiful*
*Once in Royal David's City*
*There is a Green Hill*

In all she wrote about 400 hymns. Nearly all were written for children, but many were well-liked by adults.

She continued to write poetry until ten books were published containing about 400 hymns. Someone wrote that her hymns "are charmingly simple and tender, clear in dogma, and of poetic beauty." The great French composer Charles Gounod considered "Jesus Calls Us" to be nearly perfect because of its simplicity. It was adopted as the official hymn of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States and of the Church of England in Canada.

Mrs. Alexander was much admired by the people of her country. When she died, a great crowd of people from all over Great Britain came to her funeral in Londonderry to pay tribute to this noble lady. [⇧]

*Mrs. Flora, a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church, works as a librarian at Ashland Theological Seminary. Her book,* ***Suffering and Song****, about hymns and hymn-writers, is scheduled for publication at the end of this month (October).*

# The Cost of Discipleship

**By William Kerner**

ACCORDING TO a popular saying, "The best things in life are free." Christians know that eternal life in Jesus Christ is also a free gift. It is impossible for a person in any way to earn or buy this gift. The Apostle Paul makes this plain: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9*).

This raises the question, "Does this salvation from sin and all its consequences cost nothing?" The answer is, "It cost much."

## Our costly salvation

Our salvation cost God His only Son. It cost Jesus Christ the glory and majesty that had been His before He came to earth. It required that Jesus Christ accept identification with humanity, an identification so complete that Christ will remain forever as the God-man, now seated at the right hand of God. Nothing in all of creation has cost so much as the price Christ paid for our salvation.

Consequently, this "free gift" of eternal life can only be ours by a complete surrender of our lives to Jesus Christ. The gospel call that Jesus gave at the start of His ministry and which He gives to every person today is: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt. 4:17). This complete turn around of one's life, so essential to salvation, is described by Paul as being rescued from the dominion of darkness and being brought into the kingdom of Christ. (See Colossians 1:13.)

Christ told the crowds that followed Him that eternal life with Him would be costly in this world. He said, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:26). Just what is Jesus saying here? Is He saying that to be His disciple one must despise even close relatives? And if so, is this not a contradiction of the ethic He referred to so often—"Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:39)? What does Jesus mean?

He means that just as possessions can remove one's focus from Christ and therefore come between the believer and Christ, even so family ties can do the same. Jesus Christ and the interests of His kingdom are to be the top flag on the flagpole of our lives. Earlier in His ministry Jesus had reminded the 12 disciples, "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me . . ." (Matt. 10:37).

The message for us is that followers of Christ are to love Him more than they love even their own family; yes, even more than their own lives. Our love for Christ is to be so great that love for family and for self appear by comparison as hate.

But why is the language of Jesus so severe? The answer is that Christ does not want half-hearted people being deluded into thinking that they are in the kingdom of God. (Note Matthew 7:21–23.)

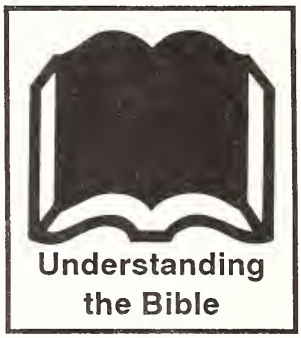
Christ reinforces this thought with these words: "And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:27). The disciples knew that the cross was a symbol of suffering and shame. But the cross is not just any suffering. It is the suffering and shame which result from faithfully following Jesus. This involves saying "no" to self-interests and saying "yes" to the interests of Christ.

## Count well the cost

Following the Lord Jesus is not to be taken lightly. One must count the cost involved. Jesus gave two illustrations of this.

In the first illustration he said: "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?" (Lk. 14:28). Building a Christ-like life is like building a tower. In our own natural ability, we have inadequate resources to live a Christ-pleasing life. We can't meet the cost. Only by the grace given by the Holy Spirit can the believer build such a life. Count well the cost—complete surrender to Christ.

The second illustration speaks to the other part of the struggle. "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace" (Lk. 31, 32). When a person becomes a Christian, that person in effect declares war on Satan and his helpers. And Satan fights back. Again, we are asked to count the cost. Can we afford to follow Christ? Can we afford not to? Jesus' answer is, "In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:33).




Alexander Mack, one of the founders of the Brethren movement, wrote a hymn, "Count Well the Cost," that should be given much thought in our evangelism.

*Christ Jesus says, "Count well the cost*
*When you lay the foundation."*
*Are you resolved though all seem lost,*
*To risk your reputation.*
*Your self, your wealth, for Christ the Lord*
*As you now give your solemn word?* [†]

*Rev. Kerner is a retired pastor and former Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church. He serves on The Brethren Church's Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

*Quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version.*

# A Memorial Tribute to Dr. Delbert B. Flora

By Dr. Glenn L. Clayton

THE CALLING home of Dr. Delbert B. Flora, our good friend and devoted associate for many years, marked the end of a life dedicated to the personal God whom he served and the Lord and Savior whose Messiahship he acknowledged in word and deed.

Delbert loved people, young and old. His genuine concern for their growth as Christians and his understanding of their problems was always apparent. I was one who learned early to respect his friendly support. His steadfast faith in Jesus Christ, the Living Master whom he served, was exemplary at all times.

Delbert loved his church and served well as pastor, moderator, and district leader. His was a life characterized by biblical scholarship, archaeological research, and teaching. He read and reread the scriptures, compared and researched texts, studied, prayed, and marveled at his findings.

His devotion to the Truth and his intellectual curiosity led he and Romayne to spend much time and serious study in the Holy Lands. As a teacher, Delbert carefully researched each lecture, even though he was familiar with the subject involved. He did not rely on experience or notes from previous lectures, but reexamined the subject, looking for new findings on each occasion.

But perhaps the greatest contribution of this man of God was to the seminary. In 1931 he became the first person to graduate from the newly formed graduate program of Ashland Theological Seminary. Following several years in the pastorate, he returned to Ashland in 1946 to join the Ashland College and Seminary faculty. In 1951 he became chairman of the seminary faculty, then in 1953 he was appointed dean.



*Dr. Delbert B. Flora*
*1901—1995*

His tenure as chairman and dean from 1951 to 1963 was one of great stress, with problems so severe as to challenge the very existence of the seminary. His steadfast leadership, his deep faith in God and the church, and his dedication to the work at hand were significant factors in the preservation and later growth of Ashland Theological Seminary. His leadership at that time extended both to the campus and to The Brethren Church. He led the church to a new concept of leadership including a sound educational system. His message was one of exemplary teaching to promote appreciation of learning and the research of doctrine and truth.

It was therefore entirely fitting that his outstanding contributions be recognized. In 1974 Ashland College conferred upon him an honorary doctorate degree, and in 1984 Ashland Theological Seminary added to several previous honors by declaring him to be seminary alumnus of the year.

Thousands of people, young and old, have been impressed by this man and are blessed today because of their contact with him. If ever the words of life were applicable as a benediction, these words of scripture are appropriate: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

*Dr. Clayton is President Emeritus of Ashland University and served as president of the college from 1948 to 1977. This tribute is adapted from one he presented at the memorial service for Dr. Flora.*

Dr. Delbert B. Flora, former dean (1953–63) and faculty member (1946–74) at Ashland Theological Seminary, died August 31 at the age of 94. He was born June 27, 1901, near Nappanee, Indiana.

After leaving high school, he taught school and worked in a furniture factory for a time before responding to a call to the ministry. He then attended Ashland College (degree in 1929) and Ashland Theological Seminary (degree in 1931). Ordained a Brethren Elder in 1927, he pastored Brethren churches in Cerro Gordo, Ill., Masontown, Pa., and Elkhart, Ind., before joining the seminary faculty in 1946.

He did additional studies at the Rural Church School of Vanderbilt University, at Goshen College, and at Winona Lake School of Theology (STM, 1950). Beginning in 1952, he also traveled extensively in the Middle East to study the history and archaeology of the biblical world, spending four terms at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. He made it possible for Ashland Theological Seminary to acquire the Robert Houston Smith Archaeological Collection.

On September 2, 1929, he married Romayne Keyes, who survives him. They were the parents of three sons, Jerry (who lives in Ashland and teaches at the seminary), Guy (a retired teacher who lives in Cardington, Ohio), and John (a medical doctor in Urbana, Ohio). They also had eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Dr. Flora was General Conference moderator in 1958, constantly served on various denominational committees, and authored many articles for The Brethren Evangelist and other publications. He represented The Brethren Church at the 250th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Brethren movement, held at Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1958.

A memorial service for Dr. Flora was held September 2 at the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church with Dr. Arden Gilmer (pastor) officiating, assisted by Dr. Fred Finks and Dr. Glenn L. Clayton.

AU Ashland University

# Brethren Students:

## You'll like the accent at Ashland University.

## *It's on you!*

**By Dr. Donald Rinehart, Professor of Religion**

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY should be the college of choice for Brethren students. Why? Because Brethren students deserve the best education they can get! You deserve to learn in a nurturing environment where you will be challenged intellectually, spiritually, and socially. You deserve the finest faculty, staff, and physical environment in which to develop, stretch, and grow. Even more important, you deserve the opportunity to become the person God intends you to become—a mature, responsible, and effective Christian leader in your chosen field. Ashland University provides all of this, and more.

Have you visited Ashland University lately? Its 98-acre campus is recognized as one of the most beautiful campuses in Ohio. It features beautifully maintained buildings and incredible flower gardens and landscaping. The carefully-tended physical surroundings are indicative of a place that is truly special—a place where people CARE.

This caring is demonstrated by the distinguished faculty. The 16 to 1 ratio of students to faculty members allows time for interaction between students and their teachers, for intervention when needed, and for genuine faculty involvement in the lives of students.

### Committed to excellence

The faculty is committed to inspiring excellence. Because of this commitment to excellence, Ashland University has become a highly respected liberal arts institution offering many fine programs. Our teacher education program is second to none; pre-med students have a phenomenal rate of acceptance into medical schools; and, with the accreditation of the business program, the BSBA degree is acknowledged as one of the finest in the state. The university offers more than 80 majors and enjoys an outstanding reputation among liberal arts colleges and universities.



*Dr. Donald Rinehart*

### Christian experience nurtured

Not only is Ashland University a strong academic institution, it is also a place where the Christian experience is encouraged and nurtured. Numerous activities on campus foster growth in spiritual dimensions.

Ashland University continues to require religion as part of the core curriculum. Therefore, all Ashland University students must take at least one 3-hour course in religion. Most choose "Exploring the Bible," but in some cases students may choose from advanced Bible classes. Since Brethren students have strong biblical backgrounds, they add depth, zest, and leadership to these classes.

In addition to this course requirement, Ashland University has many extracurricular activities for Christians. HOPE Fellowship is an extremely active group of approximately 75 to 100 students who meet each Wednesday to study the Bible, share their faith, sing, and pray. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is also a part of campus life. University Church offers exciting Sunday worship on campus. Each of these experiences enhances spiritual growth by providing students the opportunity to network with other Christians.

There is an active Christian community at Ashland University which permeates all levels of the campus community. From administration to faculty to staff to students, Ashland University has an exciting and lively Christian dimension.

Are all members of the Ashland University community Christians? No, absolutely not. Like the real world, Ashland University has non-Christians. What a great opportunity for Brethren students to witness! You can make an eternal difference in the lives of others while you experience the support and encouragement of Brethren friends.

### Other activities and athletics

Ashland University's award-winning activities programming (which was chosen number one in the nation by the National Association of College Programming) offers much to do beyond books and studying. There



*HOPE Fellowship is an extremely active group of approximately 75 to 100 students who meet each week to study the Bible, share their faith, sing, and pray.*

# One Student's Journey Through Ashland University

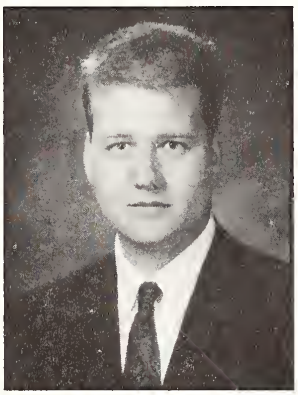
**By Eric Bargerhuff**

I FIRMLY BELIEVE that God intends each of His children to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. I also believe that He intentionally leads us into environments where this type of spiritual maturity can be achieved.

For me, this could not have been more true than when I decided to attend Ashland University and, subsequently, Ashland Theological Seminary. Here is where I developed a passion to serve the Lord, to read His word, and to live as a disciple obedient to His calling.

As is well known, Ashland University, by design, is not a "Christian college." It does not require chapel services and does not have a strict dress policy or code of behavior, requiring students to be uniform in all respects. But there is no doubt that Ashland University has the potential to be a "witness for God." Many of the campus ministries are thriving as never before. Recently, a revival took place in the hearts of many students and members of the faculty and staff, who are putting their faith into practice. In that sense, the university campus remains a "mission field," where those who have experienced revival have begun to share this fire, which was lit by the Holy Spirit.

When I arrived at Ashland University in 1989, I was immediately impressed by the facilities, the people, and the "Accent on the Individual," which was noticeable in all the relationships I soon developed with those who were teaching me. I knew that not all the professors were Christians, but that didn't stop me from learning something from each one of them. I became involved in many of the campus activities and Christian fellowships. The Christian ministries really helped me build a strong foundation of faith in Christ Jesus. I was discipled and mentored by Dr. Mike Gleason, Director of Religious Life, and by many of my Christian professors, who provided spiritual guidance and wisdom throughout my college years.



*Eric Bargerhuff*

I learned about dorm life and bumped shoulders with many people who were much different from me—who came from families, backgrounds, and cultures that were much different from my upbringing in rural Indiana. I grew socially, emotionally, physically (25 pounds worth!), intellectually, and spiritually. My life was changing radically, and faith began to take on new meaning. College is where I began making major decisions that would affect my life; it's where I learned to grow up and become a man. I made friendships that will last a lifetime, and with these friends I shared and developed ideas that have shaped my life like nothing else could. Most people develop their philosophy for living and set life goals during their college years, and it was no different for me.

Now I am nearing seminary graduation, and soon I will have completed seven years at Ashland University and Seminary. Looking back on my experience as an undergraduate at the university, I am convinced that this is a school in pursuit of excellence. The education was first rate, and so were the people and the leadership. The same can be said for the seminary, whose leadership and mission have given it a reputation as one of the best in the country.

The Spirit of God is truly moving here in Ashland. Through continued support and prayer, many more lives will be touched in ways similar to the way in which mine has been touched. All of us are placed on a journey through life. I am grateful to our Lord that He sent me to Ashland to learn to walk with Him along the way. [⇧]

*In addition to attending Ashland Theological Seminary, Mr. Bargerhuff serves as associate pastor of the University Church in Ashland. He will receive a Master of Divinity degree for the seminary next spring and then hopes to pursue a doctoral degree and eventually to teach. He is originally from Mexico, Ind., where he was a member of the First Brethren Church. He served as a Brethren Summer Crusader and Intern from 1988 to 1992.*

## Accent on Brethren students

*(continued from previous page)*

are trips, lectures, comedians, coffeehouse performances, volunteerism opportunities, and much more.

Athletics are a great tradition at Ashland University, as evidenced by the national rankings in many sports. The only N.C.A.A. Division II athletic program in Ohio, the university boasts 435 All-America athletes in 20 sports!

What about the cost? Ashland University offers assistance to those who need it. In 1994–95, 89 percent of the university's full-time undergraduate students received Ashland University-funded grants and scholarships. The average award, including federal, state, and institutional dollars, was $9,400. Impressive? That $9,400 ***is a significant boost to meeting the cost!***

Why should Ashland University be the college of choice for Brethren students? Because ***you'll like the accent. It's on you.*** If you aren't convinced, you might ask Mary Goad, Dr. Jeff Weidenhamer, Eric Bargerhuff, Prof. Michael Drushal, Chad Geaslen, Kay Winfield, Dr. Richard Stoffer, Lanie Roberts, Dr. Michael Gleason, Sharon Bowling, Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal, Prof. Al Goad, Shirley Black, or Prof. Cathy Stoffer.

On second thought, don't take our word for it. Come visit our campus and talk to our students, faculty, and staff. We think you will agree that Ashland University should be the college of choice for Brethren students. [⇧]

news from around the denomination

THE BRETHREN CHURCH - 1708

## Mary Ellen Drushal leaves ATS to become acting provost at AU

**Ashland, Ohio** — Many Brethren attending General Conference were taken by surprise by the announcement during the Ashland Theological Seminary service that Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal had resigned as academic dean at the seminary to become acting provost at Ashland University.



*Dr. Mary Ellen Drushal*

Dr. Drushal, who grew up in The Brethren Church and served as General Conference moderator in 1990, joined the seminary in 1984. During her 11 years at ATS, she held various positions, including assistant then associate professor of Christian education; associate dean for continuing education; and director of curriculum. She was named academic dean in 1991.

As acting provost at Ashland University, she will be responsible for overseeing faculty and curriculum. AU President William G. Benz said he is pleased that Dr. Drushal was willing to assume this important position. "She brings strong administrative skills, solid knowledge of curriculum and planning, and a good understanding of the university's mission," he said. "There is no one on the campus better qualified to step in and provide the academic leadership."

Dr. Drushal holds a bachelor of music degree in music education from AU. She also has a master of science degree in curriculum and supervision from Peabody College and a doctor of philosophy degree in educational leadership from Vanderbilt University. In addition, she has taken post-graduate work for deans and presidents at the Carnegie Mellon University Institute for College Management.

Seminary President Fred Finks expressed his regrets at losing Drushal from the seminary but recognized the importance of the task she has accepted at the university.



*Karen Wicks, Vi Wicks, and Linda Baney grind salt at the herb and spice stall.*

## First-century Judean marketplace comes to churches in twentieth-century Indiana

**Lakeville, Ind.** — On one of the hottest days of an Indiana summer, 65 children and almost as many adults from the County Line Brethren Church and the Cornerstone Community Fellowship Church visited a 20th-century recreation of a Judean marketplace of A.D. 29.

Each child was placed in one of the tribes of Israel and toured the marketplace with that tribe. Both the adults conducting the market and the children who visited were dressed in clothes representative of that era. The children were given "gold nuggets" with which they could purchase items from the various shops, pay their taxes, and help the indigent.

They had the opportunity to visit a carpenter's workshop, an herb and spice stall, a weaver's hut, the Galilean Fish Market (with a large-mouth bass drying in the sun), a jewelry shop, a bakery, a pottery stall, a musical instrument shop, a rope-weaving stall, and a brick-maker's work area. The vendors provided the children hands-on experience in making various items. The children especially enjoyed making bricks by mixing soil, straw, and water with their feet.

Everyone enjoyed a lunch that featured foods of that era—chicken, raisins, grapes, apples, Bedouin bread, and water. During lunch, storm clouds began to move in, causing the marketplace to close. The children gathered in the "synagogue," where they sang songs they had learned during the day and shared their experiences. They also watched a dramatization of the story of the Widow's Mite.

*— reported by Deanna Phillips*

news from around the denomination

## New Brethren classes recognized by GCEC

**Ashland, Ohio** — Gateway Brethren Fellowship and Monta Vista Brethren Bible Church were recognized as new Brethren classes by the General Conference Executive Council at its August 8 meeting. Becoming a class is the first step in becoming a Brethren church.

**Gateway Brethren Fellowship** is a group of approximately eight families and has been meeting at Hagerstown, Md., for nearly a year. It is being led by Rev. Gerald A. Barr, former pastor of the Hagerstown First Brethren Church. The class currently meets in the Community Room of Oak Ridge Apartments on Downsville Pike on the south side of Hagerstown.

**Monta Vista Brethren Bible Church** has been meeting at Cross Keys, Va., for around eight months. This group of approximately four families is being led by a lay person, William R. Rodgers, Jr. The class meets at the Cross Keys Ruritanian Hall near McGaheysville, Va.

### What is a class?

According to *A Manual of Procedure for The Brethren Church*, "A class may be formed by the coming together of people from one locality who desire fellowship with one another and who share a common desire to form a Brethren church. . . . A class fulfilling 'Guidelines for a Brethren Class' developed by the Missionary Board of The Brethren Church may request by common consent to be recognized by the General Conference Executive Council. A recognized class shall have no delegate status in the General Conference but may operate under the corporate auspices of The Brethren Church."

As a class grows, it may request status as a "**mission congregation.**" And when a mission congregation has sufficient members and can assume responsibility for its own financial obligations, it may request recognition as a "**church.**"

## Brethren Church at New Lebanon draws Easter crowd in September

**New Lebanon, Ohio** — There were no Easter bonnets, but it looked like an Easter crowd on Sunday morning, September 17, at The Brethren Church in New Lebanon.

Ever since he became interim pastor last spring, Dr. Charles Munson has been challenging the congregation to surpass the Easter attendance of 231. It happened September 17, when a crowd of 246 filled the sanctuary for a "Festival of Joy."

Dr. Munson had encouraged attendance for the Festival of Joy by telling the congregation that if anyone failed to come for other than a good reason, he would go to that person's house and sing—at midnight.

The Festival of Joy service included much singing and special music, and a message, "The Joy of the Lord is Your Strength" (Neh. 8:9–12), by Dr. Munson. It also included the baptism of three young people, the second baptism in as many weeks, with a total of 8 baptized on the two Sundays.

The Brethren at New Lebanon were also looking forward to an Easter crowd on Sunday, October 1, when they would say a sad farewell to Dr. Munson but joyfully welcome their new pastor, Rev. Russell Gordon, and his wife Sherrie. Prior to October 1, the congregation held three Sunday evening "Take the Word and Pray" services, a time of preparing their hearts and lives for the coming of a new pastor. Each of the services was followed by "The Gathering," a time of fellowship and refreshments.

When 36 members and friends of the Crusaders Sunday school class at New Lebanon piled into a bus in July and headed for Nashville, Tenn., this homeless man (*at r.*) showed up to send them off with a prayer. Despite his shabby appearance and shock of red hair, when he prayed he sounded remarkably like interim pastor Dr. Charles Munson.



The Crusaders attended the Grand Ole Opry, visited Opryland Park, and had lunch and a ride on the General Jackson steamboat on the Cumberland River. On their return trip, they stopped at a rest area and held a Sunday morning worship service under the trees. While they enjoyed the activities, the most important part of the trip was spending time together as Christian friends. The class is like family, with some of the group having been together for 45 years.

## Logans arrive in Djibouti

**Djibouti, Republique de Djibouti** — Brethren Missionaries Mark and Chantal Logan arrived in the city of Djibouti in northeastern Africa at the end of August.

In a September 18 letter to the Missionary Board, Mark said the first morning they were there, the thermometer read 95°, and that was in their kitchen! It then got even hotter outside. Mark added: "The weather is changing though (down to 88 in the kitchen this morning), and we do have air conditioning in the bedroom. I think we'll make it."

Chantal will probably teach (English or French) at a new junior high school in the poorest section of the city. Classes had not yet begun because the teachers were on strike and the principal had announced that he had no operating budget.

Because Mark has a degree in electronics, he was put in charge of maintaining computers at the Ministry of Education central offices. He, too, had not yet started work, because no office was yet available for him.

Mark's comment about both his and Chantal's work situations was, "It will be interesting." Keep the Logans in your prayers.

news from around the denomination ... THE BRETHREN ... CHURCH - 1708

## Dr. Judy Allison joins faculty at Ashland Theological Seminary

**Ashland, Ohio** — Dr. Judy (Gifford) Allison was recently appointed Assistant Professor of Pastoral Counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary.



*Dr. Judy Allison*

Dr. Allison is from Derby, Kans., where she became a member of the Derby First Brethren Church as a teenager. After several years away from Kansas for college and graduate school, she returned to Derby with her husband, John, and they both were active in the Derby Church, in time being chosen to serve as a deacon couple. The Allisons moved to Ashland in the summer of 1993 so that John could attend the seminary.

Dr. Allison has a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. She worked as a therapist at Charter Hospital in Wichita, Kans., from 1988–93; as clinical director at Lakeshore Counseling Center in Sandusky, Ohio, from 1993–94; and as a licensed psychologist at Cornerstone Psychological Affiliates from 1994 to the present.

At ATS she will teach counseling courses in the Midwest Counseling Program (the on-campus counseling program for students preparing to minister through Christian counseling centers or within the church). She will also be responsible for teaching courses in the LPCC program (an advanced study program for persons seeking advanced counseling accreditation within the State of Ohio).

The Allisons have one child, a son, Michael, who is three years old.

## Todd & Tracy Ruggles Return to Mexico City

**Mexico City, Mexico** — Brethren missionaries Todd and Tracy Ruggles arrived back in Mexico City on September 22, following a three-month furlough in the United States.

Their return trip by van was an adventure that included prolonged custom checks at the U.S./Mexican border, heavy fog in the mountains of Mexico, and a monsoon-like thunder storm that caused dangerous water puddles on the highway, poor visibility, landslides, and several accidents (involving others, not Todd and Tracy!). Todd commented, "We finally made it, though. I think all the events on the way down made us even more happy to be home!"

Todd and Tracy were disappointed to learn upon their arrival that an apartment they were to move into was not yet ready for them. Fortunately, they can stay in their former apartment temporarily, but this means they will soon need to go through the disruption of moving again, rather than making the move immediately upon their return.



*Todd and Tracy Ruggles*

They also learned upon their return that a woman (Sarah), whom Tracy had been visiting periodically to check her health, had lost her husband while Todd and Tracy were gone. His sudden death brought good things, however, for Sarah, her sister, and both of her sister's children prayed to accept Jesus as Savior. Todd and Tracy had been witnessing to them about Christ for over a year.

Continue to pray for Todd and Tracy as they resume their missionary service in Mexico city.

## World Relief of NAE receives $1-million U.S.-A.I.D. grant

**Wheaton, Ill.** — World Relief of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) recently received a four-year, $1-million grant from the United States Agency for International Development to begin a health program in Gaza province of Mozambique.

The program, which will teach basic health and survival skills to mothers, will reach more than 55,000 women and children. It will result in fewer child deaths in this African country, where currently almost three out of ten children die before their fifth birthday, giving it the fourth-highest child morality rate in the world.

World Relief has an established reputation in the targeted communities because of work done in previous programs, including a well-drilling project in which 103 wells were drilled in drought-prone Gaza.

World Relief of NAE is the agency through which Brethren World Relief monies are channeled to areas of need around the world.

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The Brethren
# Evangelist

Vol. 117, No. 10 | A newsletter for Brethren people | November 1995

Ronald W. Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, looks at:

## Where God is leading us in starting new churches

THE 1992 General Conference established four "Priorities for the Nineties." These four priorities —becoming like Christ, sharing our faith, training growth leaders, and forming new churches—serve as guides for Brethren Church ministries through the remainder of this decade.

November is the month of our traditional emphasis on home missions and on starting new churches. Therefore, let us look at where God is leading us regarding this priority.



*Rev. Ronald W. Waters*

**The Priority: Forming New Churches *(Church Planting).*** *To extend the ministry of the church to groups of people who have had inadequate exposure to the Christian faith, through the formation of new churches among a variety of people groups, with styles and formats appropriate to those groups.*

This priority calls us to "extend the ministry of the church" by moving out of the comfort of our own congregations and looking for unchurched people in our communities and beyond. Our target must be "groups of people who have had inadequate exposure to the Christian faith."

How do we accomplish this? "Through the formation of new churches among a variety of people groups, with styles and formats appropriate to those groups."

Most of us are quite comfortable with the style of worship used in our churches. Our comfort results from years of familiarity with one approach. But for many unchurched persons, what is comfortable for us is entirely unfamiliar to them. If we are to reach many of the unchurched, we will have to design churches and worship services that will clearly communicate in their heart language and in the musical styles they prefer. That does not mean we need to throw out the old; it does mean that alternative services and new churches will be needed.

Look carefully at your community and you may identify groups of people that no church is reaching. Your church could start a new congregation at another location or begin a second (or third) worship service in your own building with a style that would appeal to one of these groups of people.

### 75 new churches this decade

I believe that God wants The Brethren Church to start *75 new churches this decade.* To accomplish this vision will take more than The Brethren Church National Office or the Missionary Board working alone. It will even take more than our combined efforts as districts. Bringing such a vision to reality will require scores of Brethren congregations like yours accepting the challenge to start a new church.

My favorite example of this is the Bethlehem Brethren Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Several years ago Pat Velanzon, pastor of this city church of about 50 people, started a new church in a rural area of the county. Located on U.S. 340, the 340 Brethren Church became a class (a church in its formative stages) that appealed to many who would otherwise not have entered the doors of a church. The 340 Brethren Church recently merged with the Bethlehem congregation, but only after several years of ministry to a neglected group of people.

In July, the Stockton, California, Brethren Church started a Filipino congregation on Sunday evenings to expand its outreach to this underreached people group. Your church could do likewise. Where is God leading you in starting a new church?

### An ever-growing partnership

To accomplish a goal of 75 new churches, we also need to see an *ever-growing partnership between local churches, districts, and the national Missionary Board.* I want to commend Russ Gordon, who recently completed his role as director of home missions. Russ worked

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***The Women's Outlook Newsletter*** **is in the center of this issue.**

Starting new churches (cont.)

behind the scenes with all the district mission boards to forge a strong relationship for church planting. The result has been districts supporting one another in starting new churches.

### Cooperation illustrated

The new church that was started last fall in Medina, Ohio, is an excellent example of this kind of cooperation. The church started as part of a class on church planting at Ashland Theological Seminary, with the active involvement of the Ohio District Mission Board and the national Missionary Board. In addition, the Central District Mission Board provided financial support and assistance with "The Phone's for You!" telephoning. And the Berlin congregation in Pennsylvania also provided financial assistance. Cooperation like this in other church-planting situations should allow for a multiplicity of successful new church starts.

Another example of cooperation in starting new churches is the Church Planting Summit held last March. At this gathering, representatives from every district encouraged one another and shared ideas for new approaches to starting churches. The summit was characterized by interest in partnership in this vital ministry. Churches of our western region, in particular, are considering ways to work together to "take the West" for Christ and The Brethren Church, with a vision for doubling the number of congregations west of the Mississippi.

As I noted last month, change is always challenging. But let's take advantage of the opportunities afforded by a changing world to share the unchanging message of Jesus Christ. [⇧]

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# Preserving Our Thanksgiving Heritage

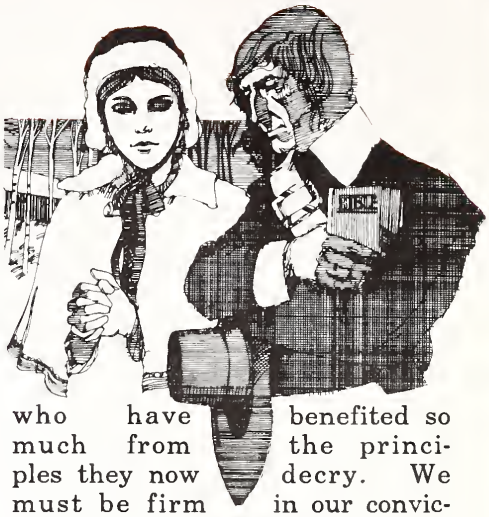
**By Gerald Barr**

THANKSGIVING is a thoroughly American holiday and a thoroughly religious one as well. It was begun by early European settlers to this continent as an act of devotion to the God whom they loved and who they believed had provided for them through difficult times.

In recent times, however, the holiday has fallen on hard times, as our country has turned more and more away from the God our Puritan forefathers loved and worshiped. The Pilgrims are characterized today as political dissenters who are lauded for their bold break with a repressive political regime in England. But their Christian foundations and their desire to seek a place where they could worship the God of the Bible are almost totally ignored by textbooks and removed by law from the attention of the American people. We are being sold a politically correct bill of goods.

The truth is that the Pilgrims and many of the other early settlers in America were devoutly religious people in much the same vein as we who are Brethren. They were concerned about the lack of spirituality in their countries, and they desired to bring a new vitality to their own spiritual lives. When forbidden by their governments to worship as they saw fit and when persecuted because they continued to do so, they fled to a place where they thought they would be safe from government interference in their lives. In the "new world" they laid the foundations of a Christian way of life that thrived for 200 years.

Now that spiritual foundation is being threatened by the very people

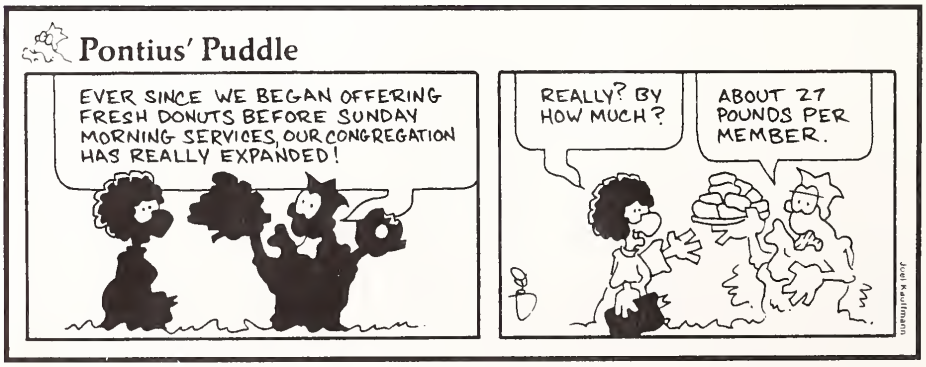


who have benefited so much from the principles they now decry. We must be firm in our convictions that our founding fathers were not wrong in their commitment to Jesus Christ.

The naysayers of today are wrong in their assertions about the Pilgrims and other early settlers. The Pilgrims were *Christians* who came here to worship God and to serve Him when they were forbidden to do so in their homelands. They were a *biblical* people, and their godly values made our nation strong in its early days.

If we are to remain strong and free to worship God as our forefathers intended, we must cling firmly to the values and traditions that gave our forefathers their courage. And we must seek after the God who alone can keep us holy and blameless before Him. [⇧]

*Rev. Barr is pastor of Gateway Brethren Fellowship, a new Brethren class meeting in Hagerstown, Md. This article first appeared in the November 1994 newsletter of the Hagerstown First Brethren Church, where he formerly pastored.*



# Is there a cruise in your future?

**By Ray Allison**

IS THERE A CRUISE in your future? Maybe there is, and you aren't aware of it yet. When God called Jonah, Jonah decided to see the world by ship. But God had other plans, and Jonah ended up with a submarine ride instead.

You can deny God's call on your life, but that will only cause you pain and frustration. In the end, you have to give in to Him, so why not cooperate from the beginning and save yourself the suffering?

Like Jonah, I had better things to do than heed God's call. I had a life to live and things to see. But after 40 years of disobedience and of running from God, I, too, ended up in the belly of a great fish and could no longer deny what God wanted me to do.

A variety of circumstances showed me that God was calling me to short-term missions—and possibly to long-term missions in the future as well. Now I am so excited about what God has in store for me that my anticipation is similar to what I experienced as a child on Christmas Eve, when I would be so excited that I found it hard to sleep.

As I look forward to my fourth trip to the former Soviet Union in January 1996, I can't help but wonder where God will lead me next. Now I can look back and see how His hand was guiding me every step of the way as He prepared me to serve others in our world today.

I had thought I could control my life and do what I wanted to do. But after participating in a class on gifts of the Spirit at the Jefferson Brethren Church, I was made aware once again that I should be involved in His service. Only after giving God 100-percent control of my life were my eyes finally opened to what He wanted me to do. Even so, the heavens did not open up with a clear message delivered by Federal Express. This was because I was still on my schedule instead of on God's.

About that time I had a conversation with Mark Baker, who had recently returned from a short-term mission trip to Russia.* Mark convinced me that my life would be changed if I, too, went to Russia, and I began to consider some kind of mission work. But it wasn't until after Mark's untimely death that his word's really made sense to me. When I received the news of his passing, I knew instantly that I was going to Russia to obey God's call and to continue Mark's "Unfinished Journey" to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the Russian people.**

Russia is a ripe spiritual harvest field right now, but it is also a battleground. The cults are fighting for every inch of ground and for every soul who is willing to listen to their schemes and lies about eternal life here on earth with Satan. If we Christians could send one-half or even one-quarter of the numbers of missionaries to Russia that the cults are sending, I believe that we would see a revival in that country that would far surpass what has taken place on any other mission field we have ever seen.

The Russian people have lost all hope because of their countries failing economy and its corrupt government. The people don't know whom to trust and what direction to go. They have been told for more than 70 years what to do and what to wear and whom to worship. So I am sure you can understand their confusion because of all the freedoms they have now.



*Ray Allison has found that he can befriend Russian children more quickly as a clown. We see him here—as Raggedy Andy—with a patient at a hospital for terminally ill children in Moscow.*

Their only hope is in Jesus Christ and the salvation that He alone can offer them. That is why we need to act quickly to bring the gospel message to the Russian people while their country is still open to the Western world and while they are still willing to listen to the truth and not to the lies of the cults.

Right now ask yourself this question: "Am I seeking God's guidance for my life, or am I just out for a cruise?" [⇧]

Ray Allison has been a member of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Indiana, since its inception in 1969. He went to Russia for ten days in the summer of 1993, for two weeks in January 1994 and in January 1995, and he plans to return next January. During the summer trip he distributed Christian literature, and in the January trips he helps distribute care packs (notebooks, pencils, pens, personal-care items, etc.) in schools, hospitals, and orphanages. He has also had an opportunity to interact one-on-one with Russian people.

Mr. Allison's ministry trips are not limited to Russia. This fall he spent the week of October 29–November 4 as part of a team of six from the Jefferson Church who worked on a construction project at a school for delinquent children in the Dominican Republic.

When not on missions trips, Mr. Allison is employed as a cement-truck driver. His trips to Russia, with Josh McDowell Ministry, are financed personally, with help from family, friends, and the Jefferson Brethren Church.

*See "An Unfinished Journey to Russia," pp. 4–5, October 1992 EVANGELIST.

**See "Continuing an Unfinished Journey to Russia," pp. 4–6, April 1994 issue.

# Understanding spiritual gifts

**By Brian H. Moore**

TWO EXTREME VIEWS exist today regarding the gifts of the Holy Spirit. At the one extreme are those we could call **cessationists**; at the other extreme are those we could call **sensationalists**.

**Cessationists** insist that the "miracle gifts" of the New Testament ceased with the Apostles. According to this view, no true "signs and wonders"—such as gifts of tongues, interpretation of tongues, miraculous healings—are now taking place because they were performed only "by the apostles" (Acts 2:43*).

**Sensationalists**, on the other hand, are thoroughly enamored with spectacular demonstrations of the power of God. They may even hold them as evidence of true Christianity or of a true church. For some sensationalists, the more bizarre the manifestations, the greater the attraction. A true sensationalist would uncritically endorse "the Toronto blessing" with its "holy laughter," barking, mooing, and growling!

I would like to note at this point that a cessationist wouldn't mind being so labeled. But a sensationalist would resent and deny the label. It should also be noted that I am using these labels to portray a spectrum of views on spiritual gifts which may be present among the Brethren. Like any label, these are limited in what they can convey.

## Back to basics

A fundamental principle of biblical interpretation according to historic Brethren practice is the principle of the inner and the outer words. (*See "The Inner and Outer Words" by Dale Stoffer, November 1993 issue, pp. 9–10.*) This principle teaches that the inner word (God speaking by His Spirit) complements the outer word (Scripture) and does not contradict it.

According to this principle, cessationism is not representative of the Brethren because its case is built on one or two proof-texts, such as 1 Corinthians 13:8–9, while it ignores other teaching of Scripture as well as Christian experience. Thus it emphasizes the outer word while minimizing the inner word.

Sensationalism, on the other hand, cannot be representative of the Brethren because it loses its balance in favor of experience and what appears to happen. Thus it emphasizes the inner word at the expense of the outer word.

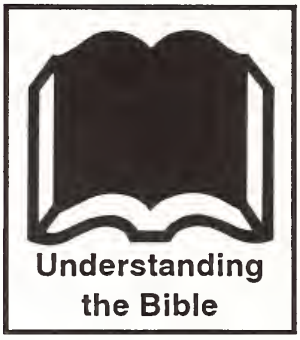
## A "centrist" position

If we follow the inner- and outer-word principle, if we accept the witness of the Spirit and Scripture, we will likely come to a more **centrist** position. This view would not confine "signs and wonders" to the presence of the Apostles but would allow for their validity today. It would not, however, allow the spectacular to dominate the life of the church, because, according to the written word, these phenomena are secondary to the nature and purpose of the church (see 1 Cor. 12:28–31 and 14:6–20).

The centrist position would emphasize that there are *many* gifts (1 Cor. 12:4–6), most of which are not sensational at all. These gifts are to be used by all church members and are to be exercised seven days a week. They are not limited to a specific time and place (such as a worship service) or to a few people (such as up-front leaders). Use of the gifts creates a well-rounded life for the body of Christ.

Having tried to draw some positional lines regarding spiritual gifts and having reminded us of an important principle of biblical interpretation, I would like now to make a few observations about spiritual gifts that should be acceptable to all Brethren:

1. *Gifts are gifts!* The word used most frequently in the New Testament to refer to spiritual gifts is rooted in the word for grace. A gift by its nature rules out merit or obligation. A gift isn't deserved and it can't be earned. Furthermore, the giving of a gift is at the discretion of the giver (1 Cor. 12:11; Heb. 2:4).




Away, then, with all formulas or "steps" or other means of receiving a gift. Furthermore, a gift by its nature cancels pride. Away, then, with any sense of superiority or "levels" of spirituality based on spiritual gifts. The Apostle Paul was emphatic about this (see 1 Cor. 12:21–25).

## Gifts and talents

2. *Gifts are both natural and supernatural.* Some people link the receiving of a gift to the experience of becoming a Christian. But others ask, "What about the 'natural' abilities people have?" Calling the latter "talents" while calling the former "spiritual gifts" may be of some help. But in actual practice, does it matter?

Natural talents become "spiritual gifts" when used for the purposes of the body of Christ. All of our special abilities are gifts, even if we inherited some of them from our parents. Some gifts apparently do come by special, direct means (see 1 Tim. 4:14), but that should not be seen as a limitation on what God can do. Natural or supernatural, all gifts are to be used for the good of the Christian community and for the glory of its Head.

3. *Gifts are to be used.* "Each one should use whatever gift he has received . . ." (1 Pet. 4:10). In New

**Correspondence Welcomed**

The members of the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication invite readers to suggest topics or Bible passages to discuss in future articles in this column. Send questions, comments, or suggestions to the committee in care of THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

*Quotations from the Bible are from the *New International Version*.

Testament times as well as today, some Christians tend to "neglect the gift" and join the ranks of the idle. Here is something to think about: In the light of New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts, especially its use of the imagery of members of a body (1 Cor. 12), what is an inactive member? Are those who are not using their gifts inactive members? Do our church bodies have limp hands, paralyzed legs, non-functioning ears, eyes that refuse to open, mouths that refuse to speak? How many active members do we really have in our churches—not just people who "show up" on Sunday morning or who make a financial contribution sometime during the year? How many are actively using their gifts as members of Christ's body? Gifts are to be used!

4. *Gifts have specific purposes.* "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others . . . . so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 4:10–11). Gifts are to be used to serve others and to praise God. They are always other-directed, never self-directed. They are always "for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7), "so that the church may be edified" (1 Cor. 14:5). Gifts are not for private enjoyment but for the encouragement of the body.

> ***"Do our church bodies have limp hands, paralyzed legs, non-functioning ears, eyes that refuse to open, mouths that refuse to speak?"***

*Spiritual gifts* do not cause chaos and division, because the Holy Spirit would then be fighting against Himself. *Abuse* of some spiritual gifts (using them in an arrogant or immature manner) may cause distress in the community of faith. This, after all, was what prompted Paul's instructions to the Corinthians. But if our gifts are subjected to these tests—do they serve others and praise God—they will be found to be helpful, positive, and edifying in the church.

5. *Gifts are to be discerned.* Spiritual gifts were used long before methods were devised to help people "discover" them. How did these earliest believers know what their gifts were? Romans 12:6–8 and 1 Peter 4:10–11 assume that believers know their gifts. Yet the New Testament puts no emphasis on finding out what one's gift is.

I believe the early believers discerned their gifts by actually practicing them. By finding their places as believers in an unfriendly world, they lived out their gifts. Not to be overlooked would be the discerning influence of others in the body of Christ, who would encourage each member to follow the leading of the Spirit. This formula still works. As the Nike commercial says, "Just do it!"

Much more could be said on this subject. But perhaps these thoughts will suffice to stimulate us to use our gifts to serve others and to bring praise to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [⇧]

*Dr. Moore is pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church and serves on the Committee for Doctrine, Research, and Publication, which is preparing this series of articles.*

## Reaping where we have not sown

**By Kathy Velanzon**

MY HUSBAND AND I were saved at the Maurertown, Va., Brethren Church 21 years ago. Shortly afterward we took part in "Layman Alive" training and learned how to share our faith.

We became involved in a weekly visitation program and enthusiastically called on neighbors of the church and other referred contacts. Many of the people we visited were very friendly, expressed appreciation for our visit, and said, "Yes, we will definitely come to church." But they didn't.

It was surprising and disappointing. Our hopes were raised every Tuesday and dashed every Sunday.

Then a strange thing began to happen. People whom no one had visited just showed up for worship. Some had heard about the church from another source; some just dropped in while church-shopping.

While eating at McDonald's, we were approached by a family who saw us return thanks and heard us talking about a Christian concert. *They* asked *us* about our church and invited themselves along!

We met another family at a PTO meeting. They invited us to visit their home, and we invited them to attend our church.

Every Sunday there would be "strangers" in our midst who came for all kinds of "coincidental" reasons. We (the visitation team) would all look at one another, shrug our shoulders, and praise the Lord because we realized *He* was adding to the church.

The same thing is happening at the Bethlehem Brethren Church (Harisonburg, Va.), where my husband now pastors. We've been inviting church neighbors to our services with some success, but the Lord is rewarding our faith from other areas as well.

A man watching "TV church" gave his life to the Lord but felt the need to be baptized and to join a church. He called my husband, came to church services, was baptized, and has become a faithful member. His wife has transferred her membership to our church, and last week his friend was baptized. His mother-in-law, who is home-bound, requested baptism at home to confirm her relationship with Jesus.

Another couple who were members of the now inactive 340 Brethren Church have transferred their memberships to our church, and others from that congregation are attending as well. All these people live 15 to 20 miles from the church. They, too, are our "neighbors."

We believe that God rewards obedience. As we reach out, He draws in. [⇧]

# A common-sense approach to religion and the public schools

## By Dale Hanson Bourke

AS STUDENTS across the country returned this year to the nation's public schools, some carried a new item along with their fresh notebooks and sharpened pencils: a Bible.

Before lunch, some will bow their heads in prayer or, if seated with like-minded friends, they may even pray aloud.

During discussions about literature, art, or biology, they may express their religious beliefs.

And after school, as the ski or business club meets, they may conduct a Bible study or prayer meeting on school property. They may even advertise the meeting and invite their friends to participate.

Such activities have always been protected, but now public school teachers and administrators have been educated about the facts.

When the Department of Education issued a memo July 12 on "Religious Expression in Public Schools" and in early August distributed a simplified version to public schools, it took a common-sense approach to what has become an emotional issue. It stated the facts, simply and without complex interpretation.

### Not religion-free zones

"The First Amendment does not convert our schools into religion-free zones," President Clinton stated in a speech that coincided with the release of the guidelines.

"If a student is told he can't wear a yarmulke, for example, we have an obligation to tell the school the law says the student can. . . . If a student is told she cannot bring a Bible to school, we have to tell the school, 'No, the law guarantees her the right to bring the Bible to school.' "

A teacher who reads the document can clearly understand which activities are protected and which are out of bounds. The only gray area seems to occur around proselytizing. While students may freely express their beliefs and even try to win over other students through the distribution of literature, they may not "harass" their classmates.

### Surprising freedom

A parent who reads the guidelines may be surprised by just how much freedom is guaranteed for religious expression in public schools.

And a student—whatever his or her faith—will have a hard time thinking of some activity or expression not protected, as long as it does not interfere with the freedoms of others.

Whether it is the right to wear religious symbols or clothing or the freedom to be excused from activities that violate one's beliefs, the guidelines offer far-reaching protection of student religious rights.

Now the issue is, how much will these freedoms be exercised? While some groups continue to seek an amendment guaranteeing the right to school prayer, how many students will actually pray in public schools?

Parents and students who have voiced concerns over these freedoms have won a victory. Now it is up to them to put these opportunities into practice.

Parents can start by asking classroom teachers and administrators if they have read and understood the Department of Education guidelines. They may also want to distribute the guidelines at a PTA meeting so that all parents can have access to the information. (Copies are available from the Department of Education at 1-800-USA- LEARN.)

All families—whether religious or not—should discuss the implications of protecting religious freedoms and emphasize the value of respecting one another's expressions of faith. For peer-conscious children, the existence of freedoms means little if they fear taunting or exclusion by classmates.

Parents of various faiths might also want to form a committee to help educate the school community about religious holidays, practices, and beliefs. Special presentations may be brought into the classroom as part of the curriculum as long as no religion is specifically excluded.

### A new richness

As parents and students work with teachers and administrators regarding appropriate expressions of religion, the public schools will take on a new richness and diversity. Bringing religion back into the classroom will add to the education and understanding of all children.

For those who value the practice and expression of their beliefs, the Department of Education guidelines are a major first step toward guaranteeing religious freedom. Now it is up to parents and students to exercise these rights in ways that are appropriate and consistent with the faith they represent. [⇧]

*Dale Hanson Bourke is the author of* ***Everyday Miracles*** *and publisher of Religion News Service.*

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### Pursuing Excellence

Choose a goal and work toward it. Later you may modify it, expand it, or even eventually abandon it for a better one. Remember, the most satisfaction comes from pursuing the goal, not simply from achieving it.

* * * * *

Those who excel are those who, first of all, take charge of themselves. They plan their work and then they work out their plan. They are neither burning out nor coasting along; they have achieved balance in their lives.

* * * * *

People of excellence know that if they don't believe in themselves, no one else will believe in them either. Self-confidence is not unspiritual. Quite the contrary, it is an honest belief in the gifts and talents given to you by God. People of excellence do not talk excessively about themselves or their many accomplishments. They are content to let their track records do the talking.

*—The Pursuit of Excellence*
*By Ted Engstrom*
*(Zondervan, 1995)*

# The Women's Outlook Newsletter

*A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society*

November–December 1995 Volume 9, Number 2

## The President's Pen

Dear Ladies,

As I was looking through the *Devotional Guide* for the year, I looked over the ABC's of W.M.S. I plan to mention these—one at a time—in future letters in the *Outlook Newsletter*.

The first one is "Have personal daily devotions, including Bible reading and prayer. A written prayer list is suggested." We have had this "goal" for many years. I hope you do not just read this and "assume" everyone spends time daily in personal devotions. We need to remind our members this is No. 1 because it is very important.

As Christian women, it is imperative that we spend time in Bible reading and prayer. It prepares us for our daily walk with the Lord. Psalm 46:10 tells us, "Be still, and know that I am God." Get to know Him and listen as He speaks to you. Satan likes to drive a wedge between us and God. We can pray as we work, do dishes, or other things during the day, but it is important that we have a "quiet time" with our Lord and allow Him to speak to us. Make your requests to Him, thank Him for answered prayers, then wait and listen as He speaks to your heart. It is suggested that we make a list of our prayer requests and then of answered prayers.

We each know when is the best time for our own personal time with God. Make that time a priority for your day.

Well, as I write this, it is a beautiful fall day in Ashland. The days are warm and the evenings cool. Perfect weather! I love the changing of the leaves; such beautiful color! As I was taking a walk with two of my grandchildren, Randi, who is 5 years old, picked up several leaves and said how pretty they were. She proceeded to make a "bouquet" to take home to save! Her brother, T.J. (he's 4), was more content to walk in the leaves to hear them "crunch." I feel so fortunate to be able to see and enjoy the change

*(continued on page 4)*

## The Devoted Church . . . Grows

Devotions presented by Marilyn Aspinall August 10, 1995

*But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you,*
*then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, . . . .*
*But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.* Joshua 24:15.

Based upon the thoughts I presented Tuesday (September–October *Newsletter*), some of you perhaps have heard complaints in your W.M.S. group or in your church about lack of cooperation among members, lack of participation of the younger women, etc., etc. It was my sincere desire to end on a positive note, but perhaps we do need to recognize the pressures that our young women face today. Society, a couple of decades or more ago, led the young families to believe in the American Dream of a beautiful comfortable home, two cars in the garage, and a relaxing family vacation every year, etc. It led them to believe that this was something they deserved and which would happen rather naturally. It was expected and anticipated as a goal to be met. Our young families today are under the same pressures to achieve that dream, but they find that they must struggle a lot harder to accomplish it. This has taken its toll in our families; yes, even in our young Christian families. The amount of pressure that they are forced to live with is incredible.

These young Christian families are sincere about their relationship with and desire to serve the Lord. They are forced to choose between perhaps "busy work" for the Lord *or* a relationship within the church that will sustain them all through those struggles.

I am sure the verse from Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD," is a true heartfelt desire of the great majority of them. I believe that the most of us W.M.S. members are still desiring to serve the Lord with our whole heart and are willing to go on in spite of the obstacles. However, before we slam into high gear and take off on that busy freeway of service, let's look at a few of those obstacles we might face along the way.

We read about and enjoy praising God for the lives and examples of many of our Bible heroes. However, the great majority of them faced many obstacles along the way—things which we may face today as we leave this place and go out renewed once again and ready to serve the Lord in our respective groups. Our General Conference theme is "The Devoted Church . . . Grows." As Women's Missionary groups, we can have a vital part in church growth. As societies and as individuals we must continue contributing to church growth and never become an obstacle to that growth. Let's look, then, at a few of those Bible people and see some of the obstacles they had to overcome.

David is one of my favorite Bible heroes. He was the youngest of Jesse's eight sons. The three older ones were off serving in Saul's army. You know the story of the Philistine giant, Goliath, and of David's offer to fight him and of his trust in God. His brave words were: "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (I Samuel 17:26b). In verse 28, Eliab, David's oldest brother, "burned with anger at him and asked, 'Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.' "

There are those, often family members or people very close to us, who will slow us down by questioning our motives or criticizing us when they see us begin to be enthused about serving the Lord. You know the end of the story though, and how David was called "a man after God's own heart" in spite of the obstacles in his path.

We all know the whole story about Moses. After all, the movie *The Ten*

*(continued on page 4)*

# Missionary

Todd and Tracy Ruggles are safely back in Mexico City after their three-month furlough in the U.S. They were delayed at the border and were very thankful to be home again. Their address remains the same:

Todd and Tracy Ruggles
Apartado Postal #45
Admon. Jesus del Monte
Huixquilucan, Edo. de Mexico
C.P. 52764, MEXICO

We continue to pray that Sudhir Kumar would be granted a student visa to study at the Ashland Theological Seminary. Please pray that the American Consulate in India will review his request and grant this visa.

Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez of Argentina are settled in Ashland. Eduardo's father is the pastor of the Colon Brethren Church, the largest Brethren Church in Argentina. Eduardo has begun his studies at Ashland Theological Seminary and Mariela has begun studies at Ashland University in the ACCESS program. Both are adjusting well to North America and are doing very well in their classes. Their address is:

Ashland Theological Seminary
82 Samaritan Avenue, Apt. A-2
Ashland, Ohio 44805

Stephen Loi, the son of David and Jenny Loi Lee-Hoot in Malaysia, is a freshman at Ashland University. His first semester has been interesting—getting accustomed to dormitory life, American food, and cool weather. We have warned him that it will get even cooler! Language is not a problem; he speaks perfect English. Stephen's address is:

Ashland University
Box 1172
Ashland, Ohio 44805

Remember these international brothers and sisters with encouragement notes, cards, and prayers.



The Kerners are settled into a new routine. David is enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Trinity Divinity School and Diane is a bilingual teacher in four elementary schools and one middle school. Their address is:

David and Diane Kerner
214 N. Lake Shore Drive
Mundelein, IL 60060

# Miscellany

Although Mark and Chantal Logan are serving with Eastern Mennonite Missions in Africa, they are partially supported by The Brethren Church. Their country is Muslim and any Christian reference could endanger them. Therefore, the national Brethren Church office requests that you omit any church name and title, such as Rev., on the envelope. They will appreciate your letters and will know—without your saying—that you are thinking and praying for them. Their address is:

Mark and Chantal Logan
B.P. 2634
Djibouti-ville
Republique de Djibouti
(via Paris, France)

Ken and Carolyn Solomon have retired from active missionary service and are at:

1200 Aurora Blvd., #210B
Bradenton, Florida 34202

The Brethren Church of Medina, Ohio, (Pastor Tom and Debbie Sprowls) will celebrate its first year as a church on November 12 with a special service and meal. Also, Tom and Debbie are expecting their first child in February 1996. Pray for this special blessing, too.

The November missionaries-of-the-month are those engaged in special ministries: the Hostetlers and the Lersches/Munson team.

Doran and Nancy Hostetler
Riverside Christian School
Lost Creek, Kentucky 41348

Phil and Jean Lersch
Bonnie Munson
Brethren House
6301 56th Avenue N
St. Petersburg, Florida 33709

The December missionaries-of-the-month are national workers:

Miguel and Sonia Antunez
AV Guardia Civil #460
San Isidro (Corpac)
Lima, Peru
SOUTH AMERICA

## National Project

The national project is the purchase of a church site and building for the mission in Peru, where Miguel and Sonia and their son, Carlos, minister. The goal for two years is $25,000.

# In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his saints. *Psalm 116:15*

The Memorial Service during General Conference honored these ladies who died during 1994–95. We are thankful for their lives, their friendship, and their ministries among us.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Southeast** | |
| Bethlehem Sr. | Mae Wenger |
| Linwood | Louise Blacksten |
| Maurertown | Virginia Locke |
| | Nellie Funkhouser |
| | Essie Richard |
| | Mary Conner |
| Mt. Olive | Margaret Hensley |
| Washington D.C. | Cecile S. Babcock |
| **Pennsylvania** | |
| Berlin | Geneva Altfather |
| Johnstown II | Ruth Ely |
| | Pat Rhodes |
| Johnstown III | Alice E. Irvin |
| Masontown | Ruth Cumley |
| | Mildred Johnson |
| Pleasant View | Thelma Lee |
| | Irene Tiger |
| | Myrtle Mulhorn |
| **Indiana** | |
| Bryan I | Willabelle Lyons |
| Corinth | Edna Carson |
| Goshen | Virginia Culp |
| Loree | Josephine Gable |
| Peru | Agnes Miller |
| | Regina Steward |
| Roann | Wanda Smithee |
| Roanoke | Amy Kreamer |
| | Helen Wirts |
| South Bend | Mildred Carson |
| **Ohio** | |
| Park St. | Aida May Munson |
| **Central** | |
| Milledgeville Beacons | Claudina Cunningham |
| Waterloo | Vivian McCann |


THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

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Mrs. Dorman Ronk, Editor
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# District Doings

The STOCKTON W.M.S. was joined by women from the Northgate Brethren Church in MANTECA for their annual salad buffet in honor of mothers and daughters in May. Over 100 ladies attended. Cheryl Schmiedt of Manteca presented beautiful songs and testimony. Connie Nevins was the speaker. She and her husband, Arch, moved into the California district in August as director of church planting. A warm welcome awaited their arrival.

The theme of the June meeting for the Priscilla Circle in MILLEDGEVILLE was "A Lot of . . ." Fun as they reminisced about their first dates; . . . Thinking as they considered restructuring their meetings, giving more emphasis to ministry in fulfillment of their name, Women Meant to Serve; . . . . Inspiration as they studied the topic "Someone is Always Watching;" and . . . Enjoyment with fresh strawberry shortcake!

The Lanark Friendship Circle is marketing their cookbook in a new format. Over 900 tested and tasted recipes are compiled in a 3-ring binder with an easel back for standing on your workspace. This sounds like a nutritious and wholesome gift! Send your check payable to Friendship Circle for $12.95 plus $4.00 for shipping and handling to Joyce Michael, 31458 U.S. Highway 52, Lanark, Illinois 61046.

Jennifer Keyes, former president of the MEXICO, IN., W.M.S., wrote that they held their public service in May with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes from North Miami High School. Eleven youth presented an inspirational program of music, readings, and a drama. Refreshments were served to approximately 45 who attended.

The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) was the theme for the MEXICO Mother and Daughter program in May. Three members told about their mentors and Susie Stout presented special music. Deb Finch, a former home economics teacher but now a Christian Education worker from LaFountaine, presented the program on apples. She gave information about apples and showed several crafts made from dried apples. Favors were apple-shaped "scrubbies" and magnets.

The ladies sold Kroger gift certificates and raised $2,000 for community organizations, W.M.S., missions, and church and denominational offerings.

## NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

November 19–26, 1995

This fall I have studied a few doxologies, both hymns and scriptures, which have become very meaningful. A "doxology" is a means of praising God. It may be a hymn, a spiritual, gospel song, or scripture—anything that praises God.

More emphasis is placed on praising and thanking God in the fall because of the bountiful harvest season. When we see the generosity of God poured out, we cannot be inappreciative; but we need not wait until November for giving thanks. God gives throughout the day and the year and so should we. We may think thanks, but that isn't the same as saying thanks. Don't we like to hear the words "Thank you"? I believe God likes to hear our words, too.

*Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow,*
*Praise Him, all creatures here below* (that's us),
*Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts* (the saints),
*Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* (the Godhead).

The 103rd Psalm is one of my favorites. Although David was talking to himself, he expressed my thoughts, also.

*Bless the LORD, O my soul:*
*and all that is within me,*
*bless his holy name.*
*Bless the Lord, O my soul,*
*and forget not* ***all*** *his benefits: . . .*

And then David continues to remind himself of the Lord's benefits: He forgives, heals, redeems, crowns with love and compassion; He is gracious, patient, loving, and just. To this we can add good, personal, jealous, changeless, and the list never ends.



A doxology in Romans 11:33–36 speaks of the majesty of God:

*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*
*How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*
*"Who has known the mind of the Lord?*
*Or who has been his counselor?"*
*"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?"*
*For from him and through him and to him are all things.*
*To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

During National Bible Week, find a special theme and dig in. Let this become a habit not to be broken.

*Praise the Lord, O my soul* (heart, mind, soul),
*And all that is within me* (thoughts, feet, hands, tongue) *bless His holy name.*

Prepare your doxology here . . .

. . . and praise God.

According to Ruth Focht, the GRATIS sewing group makes quilts for AIDS and crack babies. This project is sponsored by the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions. In 1993, this organization sent 80,000 quilts to 40 states and other countries. In a 3-month period, the Gratis ladies made 16 quilts to be sent.



## The Devoted Church . . . Grows *(continued)*

*Commandments* has had many reruns! Seriously, certainly one of the saddest times in Moses' life, I am sure, was also caused by a very loved family member. She helped Moses right from the time he was born. Remember Miriam? She actually saved baby Moses' life. Do you also remember the time when she and Aaron, Moses' brother, began to pull away and to criticize Moses? She became an obstacle in the path of Moses' service to God. She even slowed down a whole nation, as they waited out the healing process for her leprosy, caused by her sin (Numbers 12).

### Mary or Martha?

I am sure all of us have heard a lot of sermons on Mary and Martha. We quickly align ourselves with Mary as the "enlightened ones," perhaps, whose "pure hearts" know the importance of spending time with the Lord. After all, who wants to cook food and do dishes for company, when it's a lot more fun just to sit and enjoy conversation with our visitors. Oops! There goes some of our "pure motives"!

While on a camping vacation with my husband this summer—by the way, I let my husband do some cooking and dishwashing on our camping trip so that I could sit at Jesus' feet and prepare this!—I heard Chuck Swindoll say this in one of those sermons about Martha, "Martha's problem was too much attention on things that didn't matter and not enough on things that did" (*Insight for Living* program, July 18, 1995).

Ladies, do we have our priorities in order? I received a calendar from a local merchant last Christmas (one of those free publicity ones they drop into your packages when you shop). It has a lot of sayings on the back of it. One of them hit me between the eyes. It read, "Nothing is so upsetting to a woman as to have someone drop in unexpectedly and find her house looking like it usually looks."

Which are we ladies, really, a Mary or a Martha? Are we so "cumbered about" that we can't find time to rest in the Lord? And even worse, are we so caught up in the details of living that no one around us feels relaxed enough to be able to catch up spiritually? Yes, there are obstacles in the path, but God forbid that I be one of them.

Do you tire of serving the Lord day in and day out? Are you ready to "throw in the towel" and complain to the Father, as did the brother of the Prodigal Son, who said, "All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends" (Luke 15:29).

In Galatians 6:9, Paul says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

### Listen to Me

Does the work of the Women's Missionary Society in your church seem harder today? Are there so many obstacles in the path? Are you tired of being criticized from within? Do you often feel abandoned in your efforts for the Lord? Take heart, dear friend in Jesus. Listen to these words from the Old Testament which sound like they surely are referring to our world today. From II Chronicles 15:1–7: "The Spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Obed. He went out to meet Asa and said to him," and now, please, ladies, give the Word your full attention as I continue to read. "Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law. But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was found by them. In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil. One nation was being crushed by another and one city by another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress. But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."

This picture reminds us of our world today, and we could easily paraphrase the words, "Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin" to read, "Listen to me, fellow W.M.S.ers from all over the U.S.A." and somewhat personalize the message. Believe these words, friends, as God will never forsake us in our efforts for Him and His work, no matter what pressures we must live with today. He truly is with us when we are with Him. Praise His name!

May the Holy Spirit continue to teach us and to encourage us as we allow the Lord to work in us and through our W.M.S. groups in the local churches in the year that follows and until He returns. As Jill Briscoe stated, "He wants to use our boat and He'll put the wind in our sails!" Hallelujah!

God bless us.

## The President's Pen *(cont.)*

of seasons. Now I may need to be reminded of this when the snow flies!

The W.M.S. Board met October 21 in Ashland and we evaluated the August W.M.S. Conference. Anytime you have any questions or comments regarding W.M.S., please let your District President know, and she will bring those questions and comments to the meeting. The spring Board Meeting will be in May.

Thanks to all of you for your faithfulness to W.M.S. and our projects. You are helping to share God's love all over the world.

God Bless You,

Shirley

Shirley Black

---

# The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

I assume the denominational leaders and support staff in all the national offices are on your prayer list: the Brethren Printing Company, Brethren Youth in Christ, Missionary Board, publications, and the executives. These friends need daily support. One family prays for a specific and different office, personnel, and program daily. When the new week begins, the list is started again.

Now add to your prayer list the equipment at the Brethren Printing Company. Because of a major breakdown of a press, the fall schedule of publications went awry. Hence, the delayed September–October issue of the *Newsletter*.

The equipment is old, parts and maintenance are difficult, and replacement is expensive. Therefore, pray for these tangible pieces of church equipment and wisdom for those who use them.

May the joys of the Thanksgiving season be continued with the wonderful news of the angel, "Unto you is born . . . a Savior!" Bless us all!

Your friend,

Joan

Joan

# Winning the Race at Indy!

## By Tom Conrad

THIS PAST YEAR has been both a challenge and a blessing, as we have witnessed the Lord opening many doors for outreach in the Indianapolis, Indiana, area.

Two new families have answered God's call to join our ministry team and go through our apprenticeship program. Rev. Keith Bennett and his wife, Marjorie, purchased a mobile home and moved into the Friendly Village Mobile Home Park to become the chaplain couple to the community. They have begun a new cell group and a senior citizen outreach. They also coordinate the Sunday service in the clubhouse and are planning other new forms of outreach.



*Home Mission Pastor Tom Conrad is coordinating the "Indy" work.*

Rev. Eugene Bell and his wife, Georgia, have accepted the call to begin an inner-city outreach in Indianapolis. The Bells currently commute two weeks a month from their home in Ashland, Ohio. They plan to relocate to the Indianapolis area in May 1996. Eugene has laid the groundwork in two low-income housing communities and has been invited to be the chaplain to these communities. The Bells plan to organize children's ministries, literacy programs, and job training, as well as cell groups to evangelize the community. They are mapping out plans to start several inner-city works and networking possibilities with the city government.

This past summer we hosted two vacation Bible schools in multi-housing communities. Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) sent a gifted couple to teach the schools. Rick Miller, director of the Indiana Brethren Retreat Center (Camp Shipshewana), provided six helpers from his summer staff to assist us with our schools. More than ninety unchurched children attended, and ten made first-time decisions to follow Jesus. The door has opened to continue our ministry to the children, and we now host weekly Good News Clubs. Deliah Garrett is our ministry coordinator and is being certified through CEF to be our teacher-trainer. We currently have more than 40 unchurched children attending. We plan to start cell groups with their parents this fall and winter.




Two new mobile home communities have donated three used mobile homes to our ministry and have opened their doors to outreach in each community. The Indiana Men of Missions and several district churches have agreed to repair the homes. Area companies are donating materials. When the homes are finished, we will offer housing to future apprentices and ministry opportunities for new outreaches.

Other opportunities listed below have opened this past year:

- LOVE 98.3 (the eighth largest contemporary Christian radio station in the country) highlighted us as its ministry of the week in September.
- WISH-TV – Channel 8 (CBS) hosted our ministry in its weekly televised ministry on September 3.
- Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) is networking with our ministry to begin outreaches in multi-housing communities.
- Samaritan Services of Greenwood is networking with our ministry to do follow-up ministry to hurting and needy families.
- Eight multi-housing communities will be opened to us for outreach by January 1996.

The fields are ripe unto harvest! Pray to the Lord of the harvest for laborers. Pray for two new apprentice families or individuals to join our team by January 1996. Call us at 317-882-3061 for more information.

Let's win the race together. [⇧]

## Brethren Church of Medina celebrates its first anniversary

The Brethren Church of Medina, Ohio, is celebrating its first anniversary this month with a special Celebration Service on Sunday morning, November 12, followed by a fellowship meal and an open house.

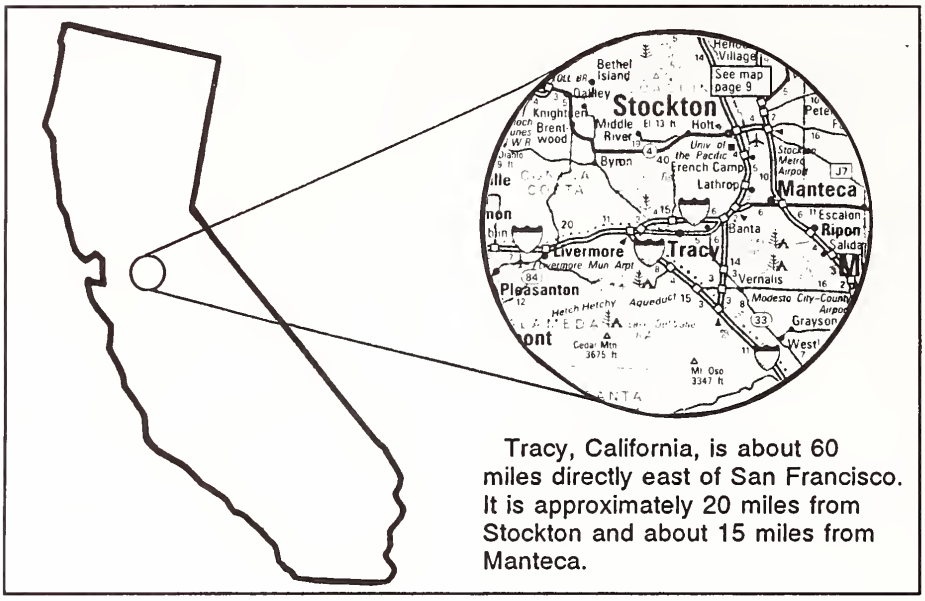
It has been a good first year for this Home Mission congregation, which meets at the Ella Canavan Elementary School in Medina under the leadership of Pastor Tom Sprowls. Attendance at morning worship services is averaging nearly 50, and 72 people, including a number of visitors, came for Friend Day on October 8. Earlier, on September 10 the congregation had the joy of seeing nine people come forward to accept Christ as Savior.

Two growth groups have been formed, with a third to be started this fall. Growth-group meetings, held during the week, are times of sharing, caring, prayer, and Bible study.

The men of the church have begun a local Promise Keepers group, which will meet the second Saturday of each month at a local restaurant for breakfast and camaraderie. Thirteen men attended the first meeting on September 9. A women's ministry is also in the planning stages.

The congregation purchased and dedicated a new keyboard in September, which will enhance the worship services. And recently a church office was opened near the center of Medina.

Pray for God's continued blessing on this congregation. [⇧]




Tracy, California, is about 60 miles directly east of San Francisco. It is approximately 20 miles from Stockton and about 15 miles from Manteca.

# California, Here We Come!

THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA District and the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church have launched a project aimed at starting a number of churches in Northern California. The vision of the project is to begin three congregations in the area by the year 2000. Rev. Archie Nevins, who began the Northview Brethren Life Church near Springboro, Ohio, will coordinate this church-planting project.

Tracy, California, is the planned location of the first of the new churches. It will be known as the West Valley Brethren Life Church. Rev. Nevins and his family moved to Tracy in August, shortly after General Conference.

Rev. Nevins has been very busy scouting out the area and has made many contacts. Leadership training and preparation meetings are being held weekly, and youth and sports activities are already taking place. Two cell groups and four share groups were scheduled to begin in October.

People from the Northgate Community Brethren Church in Manteca (pastored by Rev. Roger Stogsdill) and from the Stockton Brethren Church (pastored by Randy Best) are working with the Nevins family. Other local evangelical churches are also lending a hand.

Pray for the Nevins family as they adjust to living in California—a little different from Ohio. And pray for this exciting new ministry as well. [✝]



*Rev. Archie and Connie Nevins and their family.*

## New pastor at Northview Brethren Life

MICHAEL SOVE is the new pastor of the Northview Brethren Life Church near Springboro, Ohio. He follows Rev. Archie Nevins, founding pastor of the congregation, who responded to the call to begin a new work in California.

Pastor Sove came to the Northview Church from Greenwood, Ind., where he was the founding pastor of the White River Baptist Church, one of several daughter congregations of the South Park Baptist Church. He pastored the White River Church for six years, and prior to that served as an apprentice pastor at the South Park Church.

While serving in Greenwood, Pastor Sove met Brethren Home Mission Pastor Tom Conrad, and the two became friends and fellow workers in the gospel. Tom introduced Mike to former Home Missions Director Russ Gordon, who in turn introduced him to Northview Brethren Life Church. This resulted in his being called to pastor the congregation.

Pastor Sove reports that a number of positive things are happening at the Northview Church.

For more information about Pastor Sove and a picture of him and his family, see the current *Insight Into Brethren Missions.*

# STAKE: cast down, but not destroyed

STAKE (Saturation of the Target Area for Kingdom Extension), the Brethren church-planting effort in the Orlando, Fla., area, suffered a major setback earlier this year with the loss of its two pastoral leaders. Two other tentmakers also moved out of the area.

This has left a core of four tentmakers: Vanda Funkhouser, Robert Geddes, Enid Schrader, and Linda Yoder. Rev. David Stone, pastor of the Bloomingdale Brethren Church (Valrico, Fla.,), and Rev. Bill Cruz, his associate, have been traveling to Orlando once a week to meet with the tentmakers to provide resources and encouragement.

Rev. Stone observed that in some ways, being without a director has been a good experience for the group. "More than one [tentmaker] expressed the realization that they had been waiting for permission to minister to their neighbors. If we believe in the priesthood of all believers, they do not need permission—they need to minister. Leadership is important and biblical; however, being without clear leadership for a short time may have made the group members think in new ways."



STAKE-ing out for Kingdom extension in Orlando, Florida

The team continues to re-evaluate its strategies and tactics. They considered seeking funding for a paid director but decided to continue with the original vision of the project, which is to plant churches using a team of volunteer tentmakers. Rev. Stone explained: "If God blesses this effort, then we should be able to reach more people than if we had to hire a church planter for every new work. If we were to hire a director now, we would never know if we gave in to the dominant method of church planting too early."

Continue to pray for the STAKE workers and for the decisions they are making and implementing. Pray, as well, for the seekers who will be reached by the STAKE tentmakers. [⇧]

## Resources for using cell groups for outreach

**By Dale R. Stoffer**

One of the 1996 goals for Brethren churches that were adopted by the 1995 General Conference was:

> **New Church Development**—by December 31, 1996, begin a new class/Bible study in a nearby community or with another population group within your community, with the goal of starting a new church; and support this outreach with both personnel and finances.

Because this goal came out of the New Church Development Commission, several people have asked me about resources that will help them to accomplish it. With the help of Tom Conrad, who is using a cell-based or small-group model of church planting in Greenwood, Indiana, and Ron Waters, whose doctoral work has acquainted him with materials in this area, I have compiled the following resources.

Two books are especially helpful in understanding the philosophy and significance of small groups for outreach:

- *Where Do We Go from Here?* by Ralph Neighbor, Jr. Houston: TOUCH Publications, 1990.
- *Church Without Walls* by Jim Peterson. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992.

Ralph Neighbor is a forceful advocate of cell-group churches, and his book is a how-to manual for cell-group ministry. Jim Peterson provides more of a historical overview of the role of small groups in the expansion of the church.

Another book that comes highly recommended by several people is:

- *The High Impact Church: A Fresh Approach to Reaching the Unchurched* by Linus J. Morris. Houston: TOUCH Publications, 1993.

Morris discusses a number of up-to-date issues and approaches related to outreach, including the use of cell groups.

A good general introduction to the concept of a cell-group ministry is found in the following article:

- "Come Structures and Go Structures" by David L. Finnel in *Church Planter's Link.* International Network of Church Planters, Vol. 4 (Fourth Quarter, 1993): 4–14. *(Available from the National Office.)*

Also helpful is a periodical devoted to cell-based churches: *Cell Church Magazine,* available through Cell Group Subscriptions, P.O. Box 19888, Houston, TX 77224, or by calling 1-800-735-5865.

If you are interested in specialized resources for reaching urban and inner-city populations, Tom Conrad and Eugene Bell can be of great help. Write to them at Greenwood Brethren Fellowship, 430 N. Madison #3, Greenwood, IN 46142. If the New Church Development Commission can be of further help to you, please feel free to contact me.

I would pray that every Brethren church would take this goal seriously either as an individual congregation or in cooperation with a nearby church. May we see a number of new classes or cells started through this method! [⇧]

*Dr. Stoffer is chair of the New Church Development Commission. His address is 2217 Oakcrest Lane, Ashland, OH 44805.*




## Pastor Keith Harris completes tenth year at Sergeantsville

**Sergeantsville, N.J.** — Approximately 100 members and friends of the Sergeantsville Brethren Church gave a surprise party recently for Pastor Keith Harris and his wife, Cindy, in recognition of the tenth anniversary of their pastoral service to the congregation.

During Pastor Harris's ten years at the church, the congregation has nearly tripled in size. Membership at the end of 1994 was 56, and Sunday morning worship attendance for the year averaged 81. In addition to helping to build up the congregation, Pastor Harris has also done much remodeling work on the church building and the parsonage.

The Harrises are the parents of four children—Timothy, Justin, Shannon, and Amanda. Mrs. Harris home schools the children in addition to being involved in many church activities.

*— reported by Mrs. Lawrence Emmons*




*The Harris family*

# Huntington Church honors Dicksons as Pastor Duane retires from pastoral service

**Huntington, Ind.** — Pastor Duane Dickson and his wife, Helen, were honored by members of the Huntington First Brethren Church on Sunday, September 17, for their faithful service to the Lord and the Huntington congregation.

The following Sunday Rev. Dickson (68) completed his ministry at Huntington and retired from full-time pastoral service after 34 years as a pastor, the last 10⅔ of these at the Huntington Church.

Children from the Learning Center gave individual floral gifts to the Dicksons during the service on September 17. Then presentations were made and best wishes extended to the Dicksons by each Sunday school class, the Brethren Youth In Christ, the Board of Deacons, and the Women's Missionary Society.



*Rev. Duane and Helen Dickson*

The Lawson family sang three of the Dicksons' favorite songs—"Why Me, Lord?" "Come Home, It's Suppertime," and "I Love Him Too Much"—during the service. And Moderator Duane Lusch presented Rev. Dickson a plaque of appreciation for his service to the Lord and the Huntington Church.

The speaker for the service was Rev. James R. Black of Ashland. As part of his message, he reviewed Rev. Dickson's years of pastoral ministry. He shared a remark by Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, who said that Rev. Dickson "never left a church that was not in better shape than when he arrived."

Before giving the benediction, Rev. Herbert Gilmer, the Dicksons' former pastor, recalled accepting Duane's and Helen's confessions of faith at the County Line Brethren Church in 1953.

During the afternoon an open house in honor of the Dicksons was held in the church fellowship hall, during which friends and family gathered to help them celebrate their coming retirement.

The Dicksons now live near Lapaz, Ind. (1299 N. Maple Rd., Plymouth, IN 46563), not far from their children, where they plan to be actively involved in the County Line Brethren Church. Rev. Dickson continues to do guest preaching.

*— reported by Roxie Stahl*

Rev. Dickson entered the pastoral ministry at the age of 34. Following graduation from high school in 1945, he served for a short period in the U.S. Navy. After completing several courses in electronics, he was employed by Scott Radio Laboratories of Plymouth, Ind. It was during this time (1953) that he and Helen (who were married July 13, 1947) became members of the County Line Brethren Church near Lapaz, Ind. In 1955 the Dicksons moved to Tucson, Ariz., where Duane worked for Hughes Aircraft Company as an engineering writer. The Dicksons transferred their church membership to the Tucson First Brethren Church.

In November 1959 Duane experienced a call to pastoral ministry. The following February he entered Ashland Theological Seminary for a pastoral orientation course, which he completed in March 1962. He was ordained November 18 of that same year at the Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church.

During his 34 years as a pastor, Rev. Dickson served the Burlington, Ind. (1961–64); Papago Park, Tempe, Ariz. (64–70); College Corner near Wabash, Ind. (70–77); Walcrest, Mansfield, Ohio (77–81); Johnstown, Pa., Third (81–85), and Huntington (85–95) Brethren Churches.

The Dicksons are the parents of three children—Candace (Berndt), Gerald, and Donald, and they now have nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

news from around the denomination

## Church organist honored at Trinity Brethren Church

**Canton, Ohio** — A birthday celebration for Arline Heist held September 28 by the Trinity Brethren Church of North Canton, Ohio, was also an occasion for members of the congregation to honor her for her 60 years of service as church organist.



*Arline Heist (c.) with her sisters, Donna Barnes (l.) and Thelma Watkins.*

For many of those 60 years, Mrs. Heist and her late husband, Edgar, served as a music team, with Mr. Heist directing the church choir and Mrs. Heist playing the organ.

The Heists were the parents of three children, Keith, Kathy (Naylor), and Kristine (Parsons).

In a time when people committed to the Lord's work are increasingly hard to find, the Trinity Brethren thought it fitting to honor Mrs. Heist for her 60 years of hard work and dedicated service.

*— reported by Kay Kline*

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# Cheyenne pastor climbs to rooftop to raise money for Brethren missions

**Cheyenne, Wyo.** — Rev. G. Emery Hurd, pastor of the Cheyenne Brethren Church, spent more than 40 hours on the roof of the Cheyenne Church building—through sun, rain, heat of day, cool of night, thunder and lightning — to raise money for Brethren mission work in Colombia, S.A.

Hurd told the congregation that he would spend one hour on the roof—up to 43 hours—for each $25 pledged for missions. He climbed to the roof at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 29, and didn't come down until after the morning worship service on Sunday. At last report, $1,201.74 in gifts and pledges had been received, exceeding the goal of $1,000.



*Cheyenne Pastor Emery Hurd among the treetops, with the tent he camped in during his stay on the roof of the church building.*

This rooftop experience was not Hurd's first. He preached from the same roof ten years ago when the congregation met a goal of more than 100 people in attendance for three weeks in a row. But this was the first time he camped on the roof.

He used ropes and a ladder to pull up the tent, clothes, water, and food he needed for his stay. Members and businesses provided food, a cellular phone, ladders, and electrical extension cords. He pulled the ladder up and kept it on the roof with him, lest one of the church members steal it as a prank.

He stayed on the roof despite a storm and a nearby lightning strike on Friday that caused sparks to shoot from his teeth, arms, and hands. "I didn't feel like coming down then, at all," he said. "I figured I was safe as long as I didn't stand up, which would have made me the highest point on the roof."

That lightning strike got Pastor Hurd some unexpected television coverage. A local television station had reported his climb to the roof on the evening news. But when the station learned that he was staying on the roof despite his close encounter with lightning, it did a live interview with him on the late-night news. During that interview he got a chance to share the gospel on TV. A TV-reporter was also on hand when he came down from the roof on Sunday. Other media coverage included a news story by Lee Colony—with a color picture of Hurd preaching from the roof—on the front page of the Monday, October 2, edition of the *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle* newspaper. *(Some of this article was taken from that story—used with permission.)*

Hurd spent his time on the roof reflecting and praying—first about his own personal and spiritual life and about his call to the Cheyenne Church; and then about the church itself, its past decade, its future, and its purpose and focus. He concluded that the church must be a body (not a business or a family) that exists for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel. As a body, the church is Christ's feet to go into our world; Christ's hands, to do ministry; and Christ's voice, to communicate the gospel message.

news from around the denomination

## GCEC looks at organization; conducts other business

**Ashland, Ohio** — The General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) met Friday, October 6, 1995, to follow up on the decisions and discussions from General Conference and to conduct other business of The Brethren Church. Following are highlights of the meeting:

- **Denominational Organization.** Reviewed comments from General Conference small-group discussions on two issues: (1) whether we need one visionary leader for the church, and (2) whether one board or multiple boards would help us most effectively accomplish our purpose as a denomination. A conceptual organizational model that attempts to address lingering concerns was presented and discussed. Pending favorable review by the Missionary Board in November, a more detailed presentation on the model will be considered by the Executive Council at its December meeting.
- **Pastoral Losses.** Discussed a report from David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries, on pastoral losses this decade. According to the report, about 35 to 40 pastors have left ministry in The Brethren Church since 1990. The five reasons most frequently cited were:
  —timing; no church available or no good match available;
  —finances; either churches are not offering sufficient remuneration or pastor in transition cannot afford to wait longer for a church to become available;
  —frustration; conflict in the church or going nowhere personally or as a congregation;
  —ineffectiveness of congregational government/problem of controlling individuals in the church;
  —pastor lacks basic people and leadership skills.
- **General Conference.** Considered comments from 1995 Conference delegates and received the proposed schedule for 1996. The schedule calls for "prime time" workshops on three mornings and an all-Conference picnic one afternoon.
- **Conference Credentials.** Acted to remove a statement on the credentials whereby delegates pledge to "loyally support the Conference, its institutions, and decisions." Also asked the Polity Committee to review the rationale for separate lay and elder credentials and to make a recommendation to General Conference.

Three Brethren Church Ministry commissions held productive meetings Friday evening and Saturday morning following the Executive Council meeting. Reports from these commissions will be forthcoming as plans and recommendations are finalized.

The next GCEC meeting is scheduled for **December 1**. Please be in prayer for the members of the Executive Council as they prepare for that meeting. If you have items that should be considered at this or any future meeting, please contact your regional representative or any member of GCEC.

*— summary by Ronald W. Waters*

## Deacon couple honored by the Ardmore church

**South Bend, Ind.** — Melvin and Marjorie Kring were honored by the Ardmore Brethren Church on Sunday, September 17, in recognition of their 40 years of faithful service to the Lord and the church as deacon and deaconess. The Krings were ordained to the diaconate on April 18, 1955.

During the recognition-day worship service, the Krings' daughter, Joy Blake, presented special music, as did their grandchildren, Cara and Matthew Jenson. Another blessing of the service was the baptism of Cara and Matthew.

A carry-in dinner was held following the worship service in honor of the Krings.

*— reported by Shirley Sparks*



*Delores Wood, chair of the Deacon Council, presents a plaque on behalf of the council to Marjorie and Melvin Kring, recognizing them for their years of faithful service.*

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The Brethren
# Evangelist

THE BRETHREN CHURCH - 1708

Vol. 117, No. 11 | A newsletter for Brethren people | December 1995

Ronald W. Waters, Director of Brethren Church Ministries, focuses on:

## The changing concept of ministry in the church

ONE of our "Priorities for the Nineties" addresses the crucial need to develop church leaders.

**The priority—Training Growth Leaders *(Leadership Development for Outreach)*.** *To equip and provide opportunities for persons to lead outreach ministries for Christ: pastors with an evangelistic vision; planters to begin new churches; people to lead lay ministries.*



*Rev. Ronald W. Waters*

Too often we have thought of our pastors as our "ministers." But there is good reason why we should not think of them in this way. Doing so subtly excuses the rest of us from ministry. But each of us is to be a minister! Each of us is to serve in the church.

### Opportunities to lead

This priority calls us to "provide opportunities for persons to lead." Win Arn has said that congregations need to offer 60 roles or tasks per 100 persons. Unfortunately, many of the roles and tasks our churches offer have a limited range, most of them being bureaucratic positions (positions on boards and committees that make decisions rather than do ministry). We must find ways to reduce the decision-making roles and create a whole range of opportunities for serving.

This priority also calls us to "equip . . . persons to lead." To assume that people naturally know how to lead is a faulty assumption. Equipping leaders also must include providing for their spiritual growth and development.

### Three kinds of leaders

This priority goes on to indicate three kinds of leaders who are needed. The first is "pastors with an evangelistic vision." If pastors do not have a heart for the lost, if their passion is not to see their neighbors snatched from the jaws of hell through the saving blood of Jesus Christ, then church people will not develop this passion.

Second, we need "planters to begin new churches." The term "church planter" is a new concept for many. It simply refers to people (lay persons as well as pastors) who will accept the challenge of starting new churches and who will become equipped to do so.

Third, we need "people to lead lay ministries." This means that lay people must move out of boards and committees into direct involvement in ministry (visiting, sharing their faith, taking care of the needs of others).

**Where is God leading us in regard to this priority?**

First, we need to find ways for *pastors to make the transition from a maintenance mindset to a mission mindset.* By this I mean that rather than spending their time looking after the needs of the sheep (people already in the church), pastors see their primary responsibility as helping those sheep reproduce.

For this to take place, all of us as members of the church must adjust our expectations of pastors. We must free them from some responsibilities as chaplains for members so that they can spend time in direct involvement in outreach ministries and in training the rest of us.

Second, we need to *redirect lay leaders from sitting on boards and committees to meeting the needs of others.* Again, this will require an adjustment in the expectations of both pastors and people. We need to be willing to give and receive ministry from one another rather than relying on the pastor to be the sole care-giver.

Third, we need to *train and equip lay pastors.* In the years ahead, fewer and fewer of our smaller churches will be able to afford the cost of a seminary-trained pastor. Lay pastors can fill the gap. Furthermore, lay pastors can also be involved in starting new churches through our existing congregations.

### New training methods

Preparing lay pastors will require new training methods. These may include regional training, new

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**Changing concept of ministry** *(continued)*

techniques for education by extension, and innovative and cooperative ventures with Ashland Theological Seminary. It may involve pastors of larger churches serving as mentors for lay pastors of smaller churches. It may include larger congregations entering into partnership with smaller congregations to help them offer a broader range of ministries.

The key is this: if we continue to see our pastors as *the ministers*, we will accomplish only a limited amount of ministry. Consider how few pastors we have compared to the total membership in Brethren churches. But if each of us becomes involved in some ministry that touches the hearts and lives of people for Jesus Christ, the ministry of the church will grow by leaps and bounds.

Where is God leading you in becoming equipped as a "minister" of the Good News of Jesus Christ? [⇧]

# How healthy is your church?

The following ten characteristics are common to all thriving churches, regardless of size, according to The Evangelistic Association of New England. How does your church measure up?

- God-exalting worship — the healthy church worships God in ways that engage the heart, mind, soul, and strength of people.
- God's empowering presence — the healthy church actively seeks the Holy Spirit's direction and empowerment for its daily life and ministry.
- An outward focus — the healthy church places high priority on communicating the truth of Jesus and demonstrating the love of Jesus to those outside the faith.
- Servant leadership development — the healthy church identifies and develops individuals whom God has called and given the gift of leadership and challenges them to become servant-leaders.
- A commitment to loving, caring relationships — the healthy church is intentional in its efforts to build loving, caring relationships with families, between members, and within the community it serves.
- Learning and growing in community — the healthy church encourages believers to grow in their walk with God and with one another in the context of a safe, affirming environment.
- Personal disciplines — the healthy church provides training, models, and resources for members of all ages to develop their daily spiritual disciplines.
- Stewardship and generosity — the healthy church teaches stewardship of God-given resources and challenges members to give sacrificially.
- Wise administration and accountability — the healthy church uses appropriate facilities, equipment, and systems to encourage growth and development.
- Networking with other congregations — the healthy church reaches out to others in the Body of Christ for collaboration, resources sharing, learning opportunities, and united celebrations of worship. [⇧]

*This column was provided by the National Association of Evangelicals, which edited it and obtained permission to use it from the Leadership Network of Tyler, Texas.*

*They expected a general . . .*
*And were given a child.*
*They expected a coronation . . .*
*And were given a star.*
*They expected victory . . .*
*They were given love!*

RICHARD FANOLIO

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete.
(Signed) Richard C. Winfield, Editor

# Beware of the distractions

## By Dan Lawson

I RECALL READING about an art student who was studying Italian Renaissance Art. He commented that while he loved the class, it also made him sad. He had spent a year living in Italy and had toured all of the great art galleries there. He stated, "Because I didn't know what to look for, *I didn't see a thing.*"

I wonder if this isn't true of people and their relationship to God. I believe that many people are often in the presence of God, but because they don't know what to look for, *they don't see a thing.*

We have entered another Advent season, during which we will spend great amounts of time, energy, and money preparing for this special holiday. Sometimes, however, we get so caught up in the hurry and the preparation that we miss the joy of the season.

One of the Advent stories we usually focus on is the account of the Wise Men, who came seeking the King of the Jews. They had seen His star and read of the prophesies, so they knew whom they were looking for. Many people today have seen a vague light and heard some stories, but they aren't sure what they are looking for. Consequently, like the art student, they don't see a thing.

If you stand in the middle of a large city and look up at the night sky, you may get a faint glimpse of a few stars. But if you go to the countryside and stand in the darkness of nature, the stars become so bright that you feel as though you can reach out and touch them. The reason for the difference is that the bright lights of the city overpower the beauty of the stars.

This occurs with the spiritual eyes of our souls as well. The bright lights of the world around us, or in this case of the Christmas season, overpower the beauty of the Christ-child laid in a manger in a little town called Bethlehem.

Beware of this phenomenon. During this Christmas season, make every effort to know what you are looking for. Don't let *anything* in your life overpower the wondrous beauty of Christ.

Beware! The advent of Christ among us can be so marvelous, yet so easily shrouded. The Christ Child did not force His way into the world and demand that people recognize Him. He came humbly and quietly. He does not turn anyone away, but He requires us to turn away from the distractions of this world in order to look fully into His face. Let our prayer be that God will give us eyes to see the light of Christ in Christmas. [⇧]

*Dr. Lawson is pastor of the Jefferson Brethren Church of Goshen, Ind. He wrote this meditation while pastor of the Oakville, Ind., First Brethren Church for the church newsletter.*

## *In the Feast of Christ's Appearing*

(A Hymn for Advent)

By John Gilbert

In the Feast of Christ's appearing,
As we contemplate His birth,
Let the meaning of this Advent
Be reflected through our mirth.
Dull appears our gilt and glitter
Near the radiant, guiltless Child.
Let us own the Love He offers,
One to all be reconciled.

In the face of hungry children,
Lean of frame and gaunt of eye,
Looms the image of the Christ-child,
Born, like them, in poverty.
Can we justify our riches
In the face of human need?
Can we find the face of Jesus
'Midst the tinsel and the greed?

In the farce of plastic pageants,
Empty actors play the parts,
Standing dumbly o'er a manger,
Lighted faces; empty hearts.
Word is Flesh and dwells among us,
Present still in human guise,
Acting in the lives of people,
Truth, refuting evil's lies.

In the force of new creation,
Holy Promise is fulfilled,
Calling all to find renewal;
All to struggle; all to build.
So prepare Your Way among us,
Way of Peace and Child of Light,
Your Eternal Word proceeding
Comet-like, through starless night.

*Mr. Gilbert, a former member of the West Alexandria, Ohio, First Brethren Church, served for several years as associate professor of music at Ashland University. He is now organist and director of music at All Saints Perish, an evangelical Episcopal Church on Pawleys Island, South Carolina.*

## An encounter with the authentic Jesus

### By Philip Yancey

The explicitly religious holiday cards (a distinct minority) focus on the holy family, and you can tell at a glance these folks are different. They seem unruffled and serene. Bright gold halos, like crowns from another world, hover just above their heads. And yet when I turn to the gospel accounts of the first Christmas, I hear a very different tone and sense mainly disruption at work.

In the modern United States, where each year a million teenage girls get pregnant out of wedlock, Mary's predicament has undoubtedly lost some of its force, but in a closely knit Jewish community in the first century, the news an angel brought could not have been entirely welcome. The law regarded a betrothed woman who became pregnant as an adulteress, subject to death by stoning.

The virgin Mary, though, whose parenthood was unplanned, heard the angel out, pondered the repercussions, and replied, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." Often a work of God comes with two edges, great joy and great pain, and in that matter-of-fact response Mary embraced both. She was the first person to accept Jesus on His own terms, regardless of the personal cost.

*Mr. Yancey is editor-at-large for* Christianity Today *magazine and author of* The Jesus I Never Knew *(Zondervan, 1995).*

# Tradition and Biblical Interpretation

**By Brenda B. Colijn**

WHAT ROLE does tradition play in Brethren biblical interpretation? A reader of this column has asked us to address this question. The answer is complex.

The early Brethren were careful to give Scripture priority over church tradition—even over the developing Brethren tradition. They intended to follow the commands and example of Christ and the apostles. If church tradition departed from that norm, they discarded it. In a discussion of footwashing, Alexander Mack, Jr., declared, "Indeed, we do not intend to rest upon old practice but the word of the Lord alone is to be our rule and guideline" (Donald F. Durnbaugh, ed., *The Brethren in Colonial America*, p. 464).

## An openness to new light

The Brethren wanted to remain open to any new light the Holy Spirit might shed on the Bible. In an exchange with Ben Franklin, Michael Wohlfahrt explained that the Brethren refused to formulate creeds because an established tradition might prevent them from learning what the Spirit wanted to teach them in the future: "[We] fear that, if we should print our confession, we should feel ourselves as if bound and confined by it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive farther improvement, and our successors still more so, as conceiving what we their elders and founders had done, to be something sacred, never to be departed from" (*Brethren Encyclopedia*, "Noncreedalism").

By the middle of the nineteenth century, this was exactly what had happened. The "order of the Brethren" (Brethren tradition) was being given by some an authority equal to that of Scripture. The Progressive movement (today's Brethren Church) rejected this tendency and again affirmed the final authority of Scripture. The Progressives adopted as their motto "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible."

Today, we do have traditional ways of interpreting the Bible, just as we have traditional ways of doing other things—choosing music in the worship service, for example. Unfortunately, those traditional ways have rarely come from a self-conscious reflection on Scripture and our Brethren heritage. More often, they have developed from the ad hoc decisions of earlier generations, the uncritical acceptance of popular Christian culture, or the preferences of previous pastors (or deacons).

Traditional Brethren interpretations of Scripture also grew out of questions and struggles the church faced at the time. For example, in trying to answer the Radical Pietists, who denied the necessity of outward obedience, Alexander Mack stressed obedience so strongly that he sounds to modern ears like an advocate of works-righteousness. In the nineteenth century, in defending the Brethren practice of the ordinances against other groups, Brethren writers and speakers (like everyone else during that period) used Scripture verses out of context with a freedom that we would frown on today.

We on the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication think that it is important to know our heritage. That's why we're writing this series of articles. Every generation of believers has had to interpret the Bible, and we can learn a great deal from the wisdom of those who went before us and struggled to apply Scripture faithfully to their lives.

## A starting place

Tradition gives us a framework in which to read the Bible. It gives us a starting place. It can also give us a vantage point from which to critique the ideas we receive from our present culture, both secular and Christian. Without such a vantage point, we can't see the ways in which our culture squeezes us into its own mold (see Romans 12:2, Phillips translation).

Yet an important part of our tradition is the passion to be biblical, to give the Bible primacy over any other source of authority, including reason, personal experience, and tradition itself. This commitment balances our love for our heritage and allows us to be open enough to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church through Scripture today. Like every generation before us, we have the responsibility to struggle (with the Spirit's help) to apply Scripture to our own context.




Perhaps we can make a distinction between tradition (our heritage) and traditionalism (blind adherence to the past). Jaroslav Pelikan has observed, "Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living" (*The Christian Tradition*, 1:9).

## A living faith

The Brethren who came before us have bequeathed to us a living faith, which we want to respect and reflect on. In fact, one element of that tradition is non-negotiable—namely, the gospel message. We must hand this tradition on to others without change, as it was handed on to us (1 Cor. 15:1–8; 2 Tim. 1:13–14; 2:2). Other elements of our tradition can enrich our interpretation of Scripture by giving us a broader perspective than our contemporary culture can provide.

But we must never let our tradition blind us to new insights as the Holy Spirit helps us apply Scripture today. That would be to let our tradition fossilize into traditionalism. We cannot be Brethren at the expense of being biblical. [⇧]

**Correspondence Welcomed**

Questions or comments about this series of articles or suggestions for future topics may be sent to the Committee on Doctrine, Research, and Publication in care of The Brethren Evangelist, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

# What's so great about heaven?

**By Joni Eareckson Tada**

IT WAS a dark and windy night. Before returning to the warmth of the house, I huddled against the cold air to listen to my neighbor's whistling pine trees and gaze at the thin slice of moon smiling on the horizon. My eyes scanned the canopy of stars above to locate the constellation Ursa Major—I knew the Big Dipper was part of it, but having only recently memorized it from a book, I had never seen the whole thing.

I searched and searched, and suddenly, there it was, the familiar arrangement of stars spread out grand and glorious across one-fourth of the sky. I had no idea it was so *big*. Nor had I realized how beautiful.

I shivered, feeling small and swallowed up underneath the starry dome that seemed to reverberate with a song. Yes, I could have sworn I heard a song. Was it the faint tune of a hymn in my heart? Was it the morning stars singing together? I don't know, but the song struck a chord in me, like a tuning fork resonating in my soul. The stars and music took my breath away, and before the cold drove me indoors, my heart broke with joy, and I whispered toward the sky, "Jesus, I'm coming home; I belong up there."

## Back to the ordinary

I wheeled out of that moment, through the garage door, and into the kitchen. The fluorescent light made me squint as I nudged the door shut. I breathed in the aroma of dinner cooking. The house was warm and softly lit, the television was droning in the living room, and my husband, Ken, was in the hallway talking to a friend on the phone.

For a long minute, I sat in the kitchen, letting the warmth caress my icy cheeks. Outside I had touched a moment of great happiness and wisdom, but I knew I was incapable of holding onto that heavenly moment. Few are skilled at holding themselves in a state of listening to heaven's music. Ordinary things—like kitchen pots clattering, telephones ringing, and TV commercials about frozen food and dishwashing detergent—drown out the song. It is too delicate to compete against mundane things. The music and the moment fade, and we become our ordinary selves, leaving the child outside, and shelving our fascination with the moon, the stars, and the night wind. We consign heavenly thoughts to some other time. Yet we live in the powerful memory of those moments.

Years ago when I became paralyzed in a diving accident, my world was reduced to the basics. Lying for two years in a hospital bed on starched sheets surrounded by starched hospital workers, I lived in a sterile vacuum, doing little more than eating, breathing, and sleeping. I had all the time in the world to ask questions of God.

Perhaps friends who visited me thought I was being too philosophical. But they weren't faced with the larger-than-life questions that were plaguing me: "What is the meaning to life?" and "Where are we all heading?" Haunted and hurting, I realized there had to be more to life than just existing.

That's when I came face-to-face with the God of the Bible. I decided it was better to throw my questions at Him rather than shrug my shoulders and turn away. Those two years in the hospital were like one long question-and-answer session.

*Heaven: Your Real Home* is, in part, a result of that time of questioning. Where are we all heading? To enjoy Him forever . . . at least for those who know Him. I look forward to the day when our journey Home will end on the other side of those gates of pearl. When you get there, let's do heaven, and until then, let's do all we can to help other hearts get Homeward bound. [✝]

*Mrs. Tada is a well-known artist, writer, and speaker. This article is an excerpt from her new book,* ***Heaven: Your Real Home*** *(Zondervan, 1995).*

# Teaching: an opportunity to learn

**By Ranae Garber**

A PROFESSOR once told me, "The beauty of teaching is the opportunity to learn right along with your students." That statement has proved to be a great truth in my life.

Teaching junior church has given me the biblical background I missed as a young person and which is essential to an adult. My lessons for junior church come straight from an old series of children's books given to my husband, Frank, when he was a small boy, by his grandmother.

The lessons from these books are the focal point of our class. We've tracked the Israelites out of Egypt and followed the rise and fall of many kings. We've watched them prosper in wealth and wisdom when they walked with God. And we've seen them walk away from God and fall as a result of their greed, arrogance, and hardness of heart.

Story after story the children shake their heads and ask me, "How?" How could the Israelites forget the great miracles wrought through His faithful servants Moses, David, Solomon, and Elisha? How could they forget His promise of eternal life? Has He not proved His reliability? Yet how easily they forgot.

How simple the lessons; how childlike they are written; yet how relevant they are to today's world. Time passes, technology advances, styles change with considerable note. But the meaning of the word of God still stands. Isn't that incredible?

Not a Sunday goes by that I'm not touched by a story that God has given me to teach. Not a Sunday goes by that I can't find some life-skill through the lesson that I need to survive in my world as a parent, wife, teacher, and child of God.

Glory be to God for His great stories of wisdom! And pity the people who haven't used His great book of knowledge. [✝]

*Mrs. Garber, a member of the Warsaw, Ind., First Brethren Church, teaches first grade at Harrison Elementary School in Warsaw. This article appeared originally in the Warsaw Church newsletter.*

# One beneath every bed?

**By Charles W. Colson**

HAVE YOU, or have you not, ever been a member of the religious right? That seems to be the question of the day. And if being conservative and Christian are the criteria, count me in. In fact, I recently addressed the Christian Coalition, which would seemingly prove that I am a bigoted, closet theocrat who hopes to undermine the democratic process.

## Time for a response

Forgive the hyperbole, but the sad fact is that the contemporary media's portrayal of conservative Christians tends to veer in that direction and seems to be getting worse. It is time for a response and, yes, a request for fair and decent treatment.

We've all seen conservative Christians nipped by the mighty terriers of the mainstream press—as in 1993, when a Washington Post political reporter described conservative Christians as "largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command." Worse yet was a recent article that took this former hatchet man's breath away.

The author was Tom Shales, a Pulitzer Prize-winning television critic, who was reviewing a report on the Christian right by CBS News anchor Dan Rather. Shales seemed to be overcome. He wrote:

> Perhaps the most troubling part of the report is its visit to Merrimack, N.H., where Christian conservatives managed to gain a majority on the local school board and promptly set about imposing their beliefs on the supposedly public schools: a mandatory moment of silent prayer at the start of each school day, an attempt to get creationism taught in science classes alongside theories of evolution.

The insistence that students observe a moment of silence (not silent prayer—which even Shales should recognize would be an unenforceable policy, were it even desired) may not seem like such a horror to many. Nor is it a crime against knowledge to expose children to alternative views that have abundant scientific support regarding the beginning of life. But let that pass. The larger affront, it seems, is that the victors in school board elections might actually try to advance their agendas.

Am I missing something, or is that not a common response to winning at the polls? On his first day in office, President Clinton signed a series of executive orders that I found deeply disturbing. Yet I would not suggest for a moment that he was outside his rights, for he was making good on promises, which is what I thought the democratic process was all about.

## A belly-scraping low

But the belly-scraping low point of Shales' outburst came in this paragraph:

> As one watches the report and the tactics used by the religious right, it's hard not to compare them with tactics used in the past by Communists and other subversive organizations with ideological mandates: Agitation to stir up public discord, infiltration of public institutions and even the use of misleadingly named front organizations—such as "Citizens for Excellence in Education," which is actually a national campaign to bring more school boards under the control of the religious right.

Give Shales this: He cannot be called guilty of employing undue subtlety. Running for public office is "infiltration of public institutions"? Engaging in public debate is to "stir up public discord"? Perhaps Shales believes that Christians should have crosses sewn to their coats so that no one mistakes them for "normal" people.

## Who's misleading whom?

And to compare Christians with Communists—how foul in light of the historic persecution of Christians by Communist governments, persecution that extends to this very hour in the form of harassment, beatings, imprisonment, torture and murder. As for "misleading" organizational names, one wonders if Shales thinks People For The American Way is acceptably descriptive.

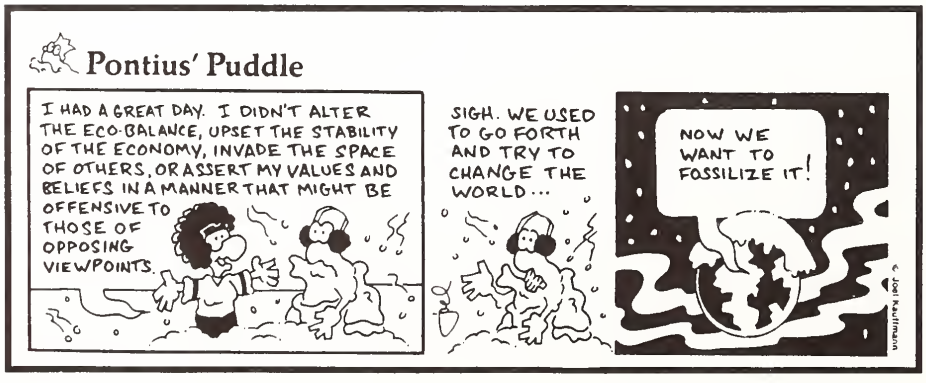
Shales ends his article with an ad hominem broadside: "But in shot after shot of the politically active faithful, many of them do look befuddled, or pitiful, or wild-eyed with rage."

One wonders what he might have written about earlier forays by the "religious right," such as Alexander Hamilton's 1802 plan for a "Christian Constitutional Society," which would promote both Christianity and constitutional government. Were he better acquainted with his nation's history, Shales might be less tempted to give in to the hysteria of the moment.

Hamilton's plans were cut short when he came in second in a duel. Shales comes in dead last in fair play and decency, and he would no doubt be compelled to resign had he uttered these statements about any group besides the Christian right. [⇧]

*Charles Colson, former special counsel to Richard Nixon, served a prison term for his role in the Watergate scandal. He now heads Prison Fellowship International, an evangelical Christian ministry to the imprisoned and their families.*

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# Restoring life to a dying church

**By Richard B. Hayward**

THE CHURCH was scheduled to be closed. The members who remained began praying that God would send someone to help them. I had just been honorably retired and was praying for some way to serve in a church. God answered our prayers and brought us together.

At an evangelism seminar several months earlier, a pastor who had turned his small church around presented a workshop in which he gave us the step-by-step method he had used. Following his outline, it happened for us!

Every service and meeting is bathed in directed silent prayer for guidance and help, and for healing for individuals. This includes everyone praying.

### Celebrating the past

We began our "adventure in faith and prayer" by celebrating our glorious past with a *Heritage Weekend.* We invited all former pastors and members to a "Walk Down Memory Lane" banquet, at which we shared photographs, movies, and memories of years gone by. Former pastors led the worship service on Sunday.

Members of the congregation who had been leaders in the denomination or who had gone into full-time Christian service were honored with their own special weekend celebration and with a plaque in the narthex of the church.

### Starting a telephone ministry

We prayed for ways to help people. After calling on a depressed widow, I phoned her to see how she was doing. She said, "I wish I could hear your voice every day; you cheer me up." From that casual remark our *Dial Hope Telephone Outreach Ministry* was begun, featuring daily devotionals for callers. The caller hears a passage from the Bible, a thought for the day, and a prayer, and then receives an invitation to request prayer and to attend a church service.

After receiving 10,000 calls and 1,000 requests for prayer in two years, I realized that other churches could have their own Dial Hope Ministries. Because I had had a difficult time setting up our Dial Hope Ministry, I decided to write and publish a *Dial Hope Manual* to help other churches do it too.

### Beginning a Sunday school

The church hadn't had a Sunday school for years. Furthermore, none of our member families had school-aged children. We prayed, asking God to help us begin a Sunday school. A committee of former educators selected a curriculum. Another committee arranged for facilities and materials. Volunteer teachers were trained. A super "Bring a Friend" Sunday was planned that would include a "kick off" for our Sunday school followed by a worship service that would include children's bulletins and a message for the children.

Fliers announcing the special event were distributed through the newspapers and by the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. On the Sunday before Super Sunday, teachers were dedicated.

Super Sunday arrived and we had children and parents. We've had children every Sunday for the past three years. Five of the children have committed their lives to Christ and been baptized. Some of the parents have also become members. And it continues to happen!

### Improving the building

Our church building needed restuccoing. We prayed about it and it happened.

After 46 years, some of the old, plain, colored-glass windows in the church sanctuary were cracked and broken. Commercial window companies estimated that to replace the windows with plain colored glass would cost $1,000 per window. We prayed, asking for God's help.

God sent us a retired nun and her sister, whose mission in life is to beautify churches with stained-glass windows. They created 23 beautiful stained-glass windows for our building at less than cost. Now we think that we have the most beautiful small church-building in San Diego. In fact, the San Diego Professional Photographer's Association held a wedding picture seminar in our sanctuary.

### Helping people with their lives

We wanted to help people with their lives. We prayed about it. As is often the case in small churches, we have difficulty finding teachers. So we got a television and a VCR. Now, using videos, we offer courses taught by experts, including *Christian Parenting, Successful Single Parenting, Divorce Recovery, Marriage Enrichment, History of the Christian Church, Life and Teachings of Paul, Teen Problems,* and others.

### Publicizing church activities

To publicize church activities, we place fliers in the local newspaper and ask the Boy Scouts to deliver fliers to specific areas. Metropolitan newspapers will also place fliers in newspapers destined for specific zip code areas.

Our latest adventure in faith is a Silent Prayer Retreat, which is held one day each month for three hours while the church office is open. Suggested prayers and prayer requests are available in the sanctuary. People come and go at their leisure. People with special needs can come to the Prayer Room, where I pray with them and, if they so desire, anoint them.

Prayer is the most powerful force in the world today. Pray and have faith that God will answer your prayers, and He will! [✝]

*Rev. Hayward is pastor of the Linda Vista Presbyterian Church in San Diego, California.*

***Editor's note:** It is possible to revive a small, dying church, as this article illustrates. The particular programs used at the Linda Vista Presbyterian Church may not work in Brethren churches, but several important principles apply to most congregations. They include making prayer primary, building on the past but moving into the future, meeting needs of people in the community, improving the church facilities, and publicizing the church's activities.*

# The Meaning of Leadership

## By Kenneth Hunn

OUR WORLD faces a crisis of leadership. Several administrations ago our president spoke of a national malaise and with it a crisis of confidence in our leaders. Few leaders today are regarded as heroes or role models. We have been taught not to trust leaders. Those once respected are no longer esteemed.

No profession is exempt from this crisis. News journalists, politicians at all levels, even members of the medical profession, and especially the clergy have lost the trust of the people. Scandals, abuse of power, and greed have robbed leaders of their influence.

### Reason for hope

And yet there is reason for hope. Our God specializes in meeting us in the brokenness of our need to create strength. Standing before the church today is an open door of opportunity. The world is waiting to see an example of how people—God's people—can work together in love.

The scriptures are rich in their teaching about issues of leadership, "followership," authority, and accountability. It is time for Brethren to begin taking a serious attitude toward God's word in these matters. People will be drawn to Christ as they see us love one another, whatever our role in the body of Christ.

If we are serious about the word of God and the mandate to reach the world for Christ, then we must recapture the essence of what it means to be a leader in the church. We must seek to understand leadership and what it means for our brotherhood. We must train and support our leaders and hold them accountable in love. We must rediscover what it means to follow both our Father in heaven and our leaders on earth.

Helping us do this is the task of the Leadership Development Commission of The Brethren Church. We want to help Brethren people capture a new vision for leadership under the Lordship of Christ.

Leadership, however, is not easily understood or defined. Our understanding has been clouded by our culture. Fear and negativism have clouded our picture of who a leaders is and what a leader does. And yet, we seem to recognize leadership when we see or experience it. In addition, history gives us many worthy examples of leadership.

Our first president was referred to by Gladstone as "the purest figure in history." George Washington was without question first in the hearts of his countrymen. His inauguration was described as a tremendously jubilant scene of approval for one who had led his people to the beginning of a new republic.



Recent history gives us another general known for his leadership—Dwight D. Eisenhower. This World War II-era leader sought to demonstrate the concept of leadership to those under his command. He showed them how a piece of yarn cannot be pushed across a table in a straight line. But when pulled (led), the yarn easily follows. So it is with people. Leaders must get out in front and lead. People responded to both Eisenhower and Washington, electing each of them to two terms in office.

Leadership may be hard to define, but we all recognize it when it happens. It may be difficult to list the qualities of a good leader, but it's not impossible to list those who have led well. J. Oswald Sanders defines leadership as "the ability of one person to influence or direct others." President Truman said, "[Leadership] is the ability to get others to do what they don't want to do, and like it!"

Ted Engstrom in his book *The Making of the Christian Leader* gives another definition. He says that a leader is "one who guides activities of others and who himself acts and performs to bring those activities about." He further suggests that "a true leader must have a strong drive to take the initiative to act—a kind of initial stirring that causes people and an organization to use their best abilities to accomplish a desired end."

### Leadership in the Scriptures

Ultimately, we must look to the word of God for our definition of leadership. The Scriptures give us clear examples of leaders and leadership whereby we can come to an understanding of what it means to lead and to be led.

God often chose to lead His people through others who were selected to represent His people. The accounts of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua give us vivid pictures of leadership. Moses, Saul, and David, though beset by various sins, both their own and those of the people they led, provide a pattern for a single-leader concept.

In the New Testament, all the fullness of God and of His revelation to us comes in the person of Jesus Christ. Our Savior is the model of leadership for the church. This lead-

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*Rev. Hunn, senior pastor of the Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church, is chair of the Leadership Development Commission of The Brethren Church.*

### Brethren Church Ministries Emphasis Month




December is one of the months throughout the year when we focus on the denomination-wide ministries of The Brethren Church.

**Brethren Church Ministries include:**

- Pastoral care and congregational encouragement
- Evangelism and church growth ministries
- Youth and young adult ministries
- Publications (such as THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST)
- Spiritual formation
- Leadership development

$$$ Brethren Church ministries are financed by budgeted support from congregations and gifts from individual Brethren people.




Thank you for your gift this month in support of your national ministries. Send your check to The Brethren Church, 524 College Avenue, Ashland, OH 44805.

# Evangelism "Table Talk" planned for General Conference in 1996

## By Tina Ross

ONE of the greatest parts of General Conference has always been the chance to sit around talking to old and new friends. The informal times of sharing often help build enthusiasm and serve as a way to encourage one another. After reviewing the goals of the Evangelism & Church Growth Commission this October, we decided to build on this informal "networking" by creating something we'll call "Table Talk."



The goal that sparked this idea was this: "To purposefully seek out the resources of information and ability in our laity across the denomination and create opportunities for networking." In other words, we recognize that we Brethren have a wealth of resources among ourselves both within the laity and the pastors. Therefore we need to find more ways to share with each other. How can we do this? By talking!

Table Talk will be a planned time for sharing focused ideas and questions. Small groups of people will sit around tables with a group leader who will present a specific question or idea and then lead discussion on that topic. These topics should be quite specific so that they can be discussed clearly in order that workable ideas can be taken home to local congregations. Booths or posters will also be set up, with a person stationed at each to share specific ideas or projects that have worked.

The key to making all this work is you, the Brethren. What we need from you is to find out what ideas or questions you have pertaining to Evangelism & Church Growth. Did you try something creative in your church in recent years that worked well? A visitation program, perhaps. Or name tags. Maybe someone from your church could lead a group by discussing details of this project. Or perhaps someone could put the idea on a poster to be presented and explained at a booth.

On the other hand, maybe you have run into some particularly difficult situations, and you'd like to see if anyone has ideas about how to handle them. How *do* you tactfully handle crying babies in a worship service? Is door-to-door evangelism worth trying? How do you create an evangelism board in the local congregation? How difficult should membership requirements be?

As a commission, we believe that the Brethren have many more questions about evangelism topics. But we also believe that God has made us a body of believers with a lot of ideas and answers. And we believe that He has given us the ability to share these ideas and answers with each other for the equipping and building up of the body.

We will be sending out letters to all pastors and moderators after Christmas in order to find out how you will participate. In the meantime, get talking about it! You don't need to be a church growth expert. This is about ordinary people who have an extraordinary God. Let's *not* take that for granted! [⇧]

*Mrs. Ross is a member of the Bloomingdale Brethren Church of Valrico, Fla., and serves on the Evangelism & Church Growth Commission of The Brethren Church.*

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### Where are the leaders?

*(continued from previous page)*

ership model is described as servanthood. Servanthood is the all-encompassing picture of the true leader of God's people.

This pattern is repeated and reinforced throughout the New Testament instruction to the churches. Acts 14:23 tells us that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in each church and then committed them to the Lord. And in each case the flavor of servanthood comes through as the guiding principle for leadership. Often the New Testament leader is referred to as a shepherd. Again, this word picture has its genesis in the description of Christ as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).

The writer of Hebrews speaks powerfully about the dynamic of leadership: "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. . . . Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Heb. 13:7, 17). Adopting the teaching of this passage would certainly transform relationships in many churches and usher in a new age of fruitfulness to the glory of God.

### Leaders lead

So how does one define leadership, especially in this age and within the context of our own heritage? A leader leads. Leaders have a bias for action, but they are always concerned about how their actions affect those who are led. Leaders must be granted the authority to lead, but they must also work to earn the trust of those under their care, who hold them accountable in love.

Leaders cannot lead in an emotional vacuum; they must be dependent on the Almighty. But leaders are also dependent on those whom they lead. Those who follow must realize that the Almighty often uses them to meet the needs of the leader.

Leadership might very well come in various forms, as God has given even the same gift in a variety of forms. But whatever form God chooses, we must remember above all else that He has chosen this pattern for us. We need leaders, leaders need followers, and we all need the Lord! [⇧]




## Ronald W. Waters moves date of resignation to end of 1995

**Ashland, Ohio** — Rev. Ronald W. Waters has requested that the effective date of his resignation as Director of Brethren Church Ministries (submitted earlier this year) be moved forward from May 31, 1996, to December 31, 1995.

He made the request during his annual evaluation meeting on November 15 with the General Conference moderator-track (moderator, past moderator, and moderator-elect). He said that the combination of working full time and trying to complete work for a doctoral degree, while caring for personal and family obligations, was producing more stress than he could handle. He decided he must seek relief by terminating his employment sooner than expected.

Rev. Waters expressed his willingness to serve as a consultant to his replacement. He also suggested that he begin his ten-hour-a-week responsibilities as consultant for evangelism and church growth on January 1, 1996, rather than on June 1, 1996, as previously planned.

Rev. Waters expressed his regret at having to make this decision and his concern that the ministry of the National Office move forward and not come to a standstill.

General Conference moderator Dr. Richard Allison said that the moderator-track accepted the change in termination date with regrets, but recognized the necessity of it. He noted that a search process has been started for an *interim* director. The transition to an interim director will also be a matter of discussion at the General Conference Executive Council meeting to be held December 1 in Ashland.

Rev. Waters is scheduled to become assistant professor of evangelism at Ashland Theological Seminary September 1, 1996. According to the terms of an agreement between the seminary and The Brethren Church, he will carry a three-quarter time teaching load in evangelism and church growth at the seminary and serve the denomination one-quarter time as staff in evangelism and church growth.

# Medina church celebrates first anniversary

**Medina, Ohio** — The Brethren Church of Medina marked its first anniversary on Sunday, November 12, with a special celebration worship service. The service was held in the multi-purpose room at the Ella Canavan Elementary School in Medina, where the congregation has met since November 1994.

Dr. Dale Stoffer, professor at Ashland Theological Seminary and a member of the core group that helped begin the congregation, delivered the message. He challenged the Brethren never to forget the past from where God has faithfully brought them and to be confident that God will faithfully lead them into the future.

Pastor Tom Sprowls conducted the service, and Michelle DeLaughter led the congregation in singing and praise. Special music was presented by Ray Stasko, a Medina resident. Mr. Stasko introduced the song by telling that on one occasion Pastor Sprowls came to his door to invite him to the new Brethren church that was starting just across the street. Mr. Stasko asked, "What is The Brethren Church?" to which Pastor Sprowls' only reply was, "Come and see." Appropriately, the song he sang was entitled, "Come and See" (the face of God).

In the time of sharing during the service, the Vunderink family presented the church a hand-painted slate with the logo of The Brethren Church depicted on it. They gave this gift to mark the anniversary and to show their appreciation for the work that God has done in the life of their family since they became a part of this new church.



*Some of the 88 people who attended the first anniversary celebration of The Brethren Church of Medina.*

Attendance for the service was 88, which included a number of visitors. Among the visitors were members of the core group from Ashland that had helped begin the Medina congregation, who had come back for a reunion and to celebrate. Also in attendance were representatives from the Brethren Church National Office; the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church; the Ohio District Mission Board; and from the Ashland Garber, Ashland Park Street, Gretna (Bellefontaine, Ohio), Newark (Ohio), and Berlin (Pennsylvania) Brethren Churches.

Following the worship service a dinner was served, and an open house was held at the church's new office near the Medina town square.

*— reported by Pastor Tom Sprowls*

news from around the denomination

## Brethren Church in Paraguay meeting again for worship

**Ashland, Ohio** — The Brethren Church in Paraguay has restarted, according to Rev. Reilly Smith, Executive Director of the Missionary Board, who recently returned from a visit to Argentina and Paraguay.

The Brethren in Paraguay reclaimed their building in April, cleaned, repaired, and remodeled it extensively, and then began services again in June. About 35 Brethren worship together every Sunday, and visitors attend frequently. The work in Paraguay is a joint mission effort of The Brethren Church of Argentina and of the U.S.

### In Memory

**Ralph H. Hutzell**, 74, a member for 51 years of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church, died October 18. He was an active member of the St. James Church, serving as a teacher of the Men's and Women's Bible Class, deacon, and (at the time of his death) chair of the Ministry of Deacons. He was also active in the Southeastern District, where he had served on the District Mission Board and as treasurer of that board. In addition, he served on the national Missionary Board of the Brethren Church from 1976 to 1985. He is survived by his wife, Lois, and three children—Nelson, Phillip, and Brenda (wife of Darryl Shanholtz, assistant pastor of the St. James Church). Mr. Hutzell's funeral service was held October 21 at the St. James Brethren Church, with Pastor Brian Moore officiating.

**Rev. H. William Fells**, 73, a Brethren pastor from 1955 to 1970, died November 19 in Sun City, Ariz. Rev. Fells served the Ashland Garber, Stockton, Calif., and Massillon, Ohio, Brethren Churches, followed by pastorates in the Church of the Brethren. He and his wife, Elsie, who survives him, were the parents of former Brethren missionary Mrs. Sharon Winter.

# Couple from Sergeantsville Church rides bicycles to spread the gospel

**Sergeantsville, N.J.** — John and Judy Swanson, members of the Sergeantsville First Brethren Church, have an unusual method of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They ride bicycles for the Lord.



*John and Judy Swanson take a breather in Michigan from a cross-country mission bicycling trip.*

The Swansons are members of WHEEL POWER Christian Cyclists. WHEEL POWER stands for Witnessing, Helping, Evangelizing, Encouraging, and Loving as we Pedal Our Way to Eternal Rewards.

This past summer, the Swansons joined about two dozen other WHEEL POWER riders on a nine-week, 3,500-mile, summer mission trip by bicycle from Seattle, Washington, to Yorktown Beach, Virginia. Judy took the entire trip, and John completed about two-thirds of the journey.

Along the way, the cyclists presented programs at churches and taught Sunday school classes. They also had opportunities to share their faith personally. "When you're on a bicycle, you're wide open to anybody, and people are saying, 'Who are you and where are you going?' " Mrs. Swanson said. "We wanted to share that we're a child of God and we're going to heaven."

This is the second summer cycling trip for the Swansons. They also joined WHEEL POWER's first trans-America bicycle tour during the 1994 summer. Judy did that entire trip as well, and John joined her for about a third of the way.

In addition to participating in the trans-America trips, the Swansons are active in WHEEL POWER at the local level, serving as the group's area representatives. The purpose of the group is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, using cycling as a means to bring people together to hear God's word. One way of doing this is by sponsoring bike-a-thons.

The Swansons are also thinking of branching out on a bicycling ministry to Europe, tied in with a visit to their son, who's stationed in Germany. "Being a part of this method of reaching out and touching lives gives a purpose to cycling and summer vacations," Mrs. Swanson said.

*The information and quotations in this article were taken from a newspaper article written by Joelle Subourne, which appeared in the* ***Hunterdon County Democrat.*** *Submitted to the* EVANGELIST *by Mrs. Lawrence H. Emmons, Sergeantsville Church secretary.*

news from around the denomination

## Bethlehem Church sponsors "Meet Your Neighbor Night"

**Harrisonburg, Va.** — "Meet Your Neighbor Night," a Passing On the Promise idea that works, was sponsored by the Bethlehem Brethren Church on September 3.

Church members visited 200 homes in the area and left invitations with each family. A picnic supper, musical entertainment, and games for the young-at-heart were planned. Hopes were high for a huge crowd. The weather was beautiful (an answer to prayer), and all was prepared.

Approximately 60 people attended. Eighteen of these were neighbors; five were guests of a member; ten were new-attenders (people who have attended less than a year at Bethlehem); six were members of a music team from the Waterbrook Brethren Church; and the rest were "old" members.

Was the event a success? "**Yes!**" says Kathy Velanzon, wife of Pastor Pat Velanzon. "We worked together and stepped out in faith with excitement and some trepidation. We stepped out in obedience and in the power of the Holy Spirit. And we reached out in word and deed."

*— reported by Kathy Velanzon.*

### Seminary Librarian Honored

**Rev. Bradley Weidenhamer** was honored by Ashland University and Theological Seminary this fall for his 25 years of service as Seminary Librarian. A graduate of both AU (63) and ATS (66), Rev. Weidenhamer served at the Goshen and Elkhart, Ind., First Brethren Churches before returning to the seminary on July 1, 1970. During his years heading the library, the collection has grown from 32,000 to 79,000 volumes and the facility has undergone a major enlargement. Rev. Weidenhamer was presented a certificate of recognition and a gold Ashland University wristwatch.

# Liberty Church honors Doc Shank for fifty years in Christian ministry

**Quicksburg, Va.** — Members of the Liberty Brethren Church surprised their pastor—Rev. Doc Shank —on Sunday afternoon, September 24, with a celebration honoring him for his 50 years in Christian ministry.

The "Holy Terrors," a group of local pastors, presented a musical program for the celebration. In addition, friends from Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, and Maryland shared stories about Rev. Shank and read letters of appreciation. A carry-in meal after the program provided an opportunity for visiting and fellowship.



*Rev. Doc and Jean Shank*

The Liberty congregation presented Rev. Shank and his wife, Jean, a VCR and other gifts as an expression of their love and of appreciation for their ministry.

Doc (as he is known to nearly everyone) began his pastoral ministry on the first Sunday of December 1945 at the Glenford, Ohio, Brethren Church, while he was a student at Ashland College. He continued to serve this congregation while finishing college (B.A. in 1948) and during part of his time at Ashland Theological Seminary. While finishing seminary and taking additional work at Ashland College for a teaching certificate, he served two non-Brethren congregations near Ashland.

From September 1955 to June 1966 Doc and Jean (whom he had married September 6, 1952) served as Brethren missionaries in Nigeria, West Africa. When they and their two children (Dennis, born in 1953, and Donna, born in 1956) returned to the U.S. in 1966, Doc became pastor of the Maurertown, Va., Brethren Church, where he served until 1973. During this pastorate he also served (from 1967–73) the St. Luke (Woodstock, Va.) and Liberty Brethren Churches. He next served the Gretna (Bellefontaine, Ohio) Brethren Church (1973–77) and then the Herndon, Va., Brethren Church (1977–79). In June 1979 he returned to the Liberty Brethren Church, which he has pastored ever since, also serving (until the past couple of years) as pastor of the Mathias, W. Va., Brethren Church.

In addition to his pastoral work, Doc has served since 1979 as chaplain at Shenandoah Memorial Hospital in Woodstock, Va. He has also served for more than 20 years as an active member of the board of trustees of Ashland University and Theological Seminary. And throughout his ministry he has been actively involved in the district and denominational work of The Brethren Church.

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